

## **Executive Summary**

The General Assembly requested, through a budget resolution, that the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) submit a report that reviews the existing policies governing the eligibility for receiving an organ donation, identifies reasons for denial of organ transplantation, and the number of individuals who had organ transplant needs denied or deferred under each reason since calendar 2018. This request was driven by a concern that financial requirements for organ transplant candidates may be a cause of the denial or deferral of care in Maryland.

MHCC staff requested and reviewed the organ transplant policies of The Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH), University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC), and MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute (MGTI). Staff concluded that the current policies of JHH, UMMC, and MGTI are consistent with federal regulations that require an assessment of the financial support available for a patient. The hospitals' policies do not include a rigid set of criteria, such as specific financial targets or documentation of assets that could be perceived as discriminatory and burdensome to some organ transplant candidates. While the policies of hospitals may not directly create financial barriers for organ transplant candidates, additional research on the practices of hospitals and the perception of patients who do not follow through with the process for gaining access to an organ transplant waitlist may provide further insight.

MHCC staff concluded that additional research is also needed to provide further insight whether hospitals' financial screening processes are hindering access to organ transplant waitlists. While it does not appear to be an issue based on the descriptions provided by JHH, UMMC, and MGTI, additional information would be very beneficial. MHCC staff were unable to obtain complete information on how often and why patients are not accepted onto an organ transplant waitlist at UMMC, JHH, or MGTI is a barrier to accurately understanding the extent to which a lack of financial resources is a barrier to an organ transplant for Maryland residents.

MHCC staff concluded that patients do not appear to be removed from organ transplant waitlists at Maryland hospitals for financial reasons once listed. Information reported by JHH indicates no patients were removed for financial reasons, only less than one percent for insurance complications. UMMC reported that no patients were removed for financial reasons.

MHCC staff recommends the State conduct additional research, such as surveying or interviewing patients who both do and do not pursue an organ transplant following referral from a physician. It would be especially useful to include patients who begin the process for getting on an organ transplant waitlist at UMMC, JHH, or MGTI, but who do not complete it. Any additional research should focus on the extent to which financial barriers and other social determinants may affect patients' pursuit of an organ transplant.