



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

January 28, 2020

TESTIMONY

Submitted by
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Maryland Association of Community Colleges

HB 187 – Public Institutions of Higher Education – Outbreak Response Plan

Position: Support with Amendments

On behalf of Maryland's 16 community colleges, I want to thank the sponsor for introducing HB 187 that requires public institutions of higher education to implement an "Outbreak Response Plan. Our institutions certainly recognize and support the need to develop, maintain and periodically review such a plan to address an infectious disease or other health emergency that may arise on campus. However, community colleges cannot currently meet the prescriptive protocols and processes outlined in this legislation as drafted for the following reasons:

- Maryland's community colleges' student populations consist overwhelmingly of commuter students who attend classes and return to their residences within the local community. Presently, and successfully, community colleges rely upon and coordinate with local area police and Health Departments in the event a health emergency arises on a community college campus.
- Each of Maryland's community colleges have adopted the procedures and protocols of the applicable county police and Health Departments in which the college are located. In the event of any emergency condition, each community college immediately alerts its local area police department and/or Health Department and follows all protocols as instructed by these agencies.
- The majority of community colleges do not have Health Centers, quarantine facilities, or certified health professionals to implement the mandates of the proposed legislation.
- With regard to any health emergency within a community college, the community college immediately contacts its local county police and Health Department and refers the impacted student to a local area hospital.
- Only medically trained professionals should be entrusted to ask health related questions relating to a student's immunizations or to make a determination that a student should be quarantined. Most of Maryland's community colleges do not have these professionals on campus.

MACC recommends an amendment to House Bill 187 which would require each Maryland community college to work with their local area Health Department to develop an Outbreak Response Plan in the event a contagious disease or health emergency is identified. Maryland's community colleges are community based and response to any health emergency should be community determined and established.

Imposing this legislation as drafted is not financially justified nor will it establish a more effective response to a health emergency than for community colleges to follow local area police and Health Department guidelines relating to any such health emergency.

In conclusion, please know that our campuses recognize the need to assure our "critical incident plans" include measures to contain an infectious disease or other health emergency, as well as a process to periodically review and update these procedures.