



2020 SESSION POSITION PAPER - LETTER OF SUPPORT

BILL: HB 187- Public Institutions of Higher Education - Outbreak Response Plan

COMMITTEE: Appropriations Committee

POSITION: Letter of Support with Amendments

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 187 Requiring a public institution of higher education to submit an outbreak response plan to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) on or before August 1 of each year, requiring a public institution of higher education to implement the outbreak response plan under certain circumstances; requiring the outbreak response plan to include certain protocols and processes and the provision of certain staff, among other activities.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) **supports** HB 187, **with amendments**. We agree with the sponsors that this bill will ensure better preparation on the part of colleges and universities prior to potential serious disease outbreaks. It also accomplishes two important goals: HB 187 1) increases communication between colleges/universities and their surrounding healthcare resources and 2) requires notification to medically vulnerable students and campus employees so they can take proper precautions until an infectious disease threat has been resolved.

MACHO recommends two amendments as follows:

1) *Delete "life-threatening" from page 2- lines 5, 19, 22, and 31, and page 3- line 3.*

Regardless of whether the contagious disease is given a descriptor of "life-threatening" or anything else, a clinician will have to make a decision as to whether a given infection is serious enough to activate the response plan. The designation of "life-threatening" may result in unnecessary confusion.

2) *On page 3- line 6, replace:*

(II) FEDERAL AND STATE SURVEILLANCE NETWORKS

with:

(II) THE LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Having colleges and universities try to directly contact the CDC may result in an uncoordinated response between the MDH and federal health investigators. It is MDH's responsibility to consult the CDC and any other partnering federal agencies. Notification of the local health department will begin the proper notification process to MDH, and if necessary, the CDC, and expedite the mobilization of regional resources and facilitate communication amongst healthcare providers, EMS, and other entities at the local level.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of **support with amendments** for HB 187. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-614-6891. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*