



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Members of the House Appropriations Committee

February 27, 2020

HB 152, Budget Reconciliation & Financing Act- Letter of Concern, Maryland Community Health Resources Commission

LETTER OF CONCERN: HB 152, BUDGET RECONCILIATION & FINANCING ACT OF 2020-- MARYLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES COMMISSION

Chair Reznik and Members of the Appropriations Health & Human Resources Subcommittee:

The Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) submits this Letter of Concern regarding language included in HB 152, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA), that would result in a permanent cut of \$4 million to the annual budget of the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission's (CHRC). **MRHA requests that your Subcommittee reject the language proposed in this year's BRFA and maintain the long-standing legislative mandate that the CHRC's budget be funded at no less than \$8 million in FY 2021 and beyond.**

MRHA is a non-profit member organization comprised of local health departments, hospitals, health centers, AHECs, non-profits, universities, community organizations, health professionals, and community members. MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents.

The CHRC is a critical partner in providing access to care for our rural communities. CHRC has provided funding for 121 projects in every rural area of the State. These projects have served more than 105,000 Marylanders, providing access to primary care, behavioral health, and dental services.

The projects funded by the CHRC are being sustained and generating quantifiable outcomes. Many of these projects would not have begun without CHRC's initial funding of the project. Maryland's rural communities are particularly impacted by health access challenges, including transportation, lack of providers, and workforce issues, and CHRC is playing a vital role in addressing these challenges.

For these reasons, MRHA requests that your Subcommittee reject the language proposed in this year's BRFA that impacts the CHRC and maintain the long-standing legislative mandate of \$8 million for the CHRC's budget.

Thank you again for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Lara Wilson, Executive Director, larawilson@mdruralhealth.org

cc: Members, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee