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**Committee:** Senate Budget & Taxation Committee  
**Bill Number:** House Bill 192  
**Title:** Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020  
**Hearing Date:** February 26, 2020  
**Position:** Oppose

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The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) opposes *Senate Bill 192 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020*. This bill would reduce funding for the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission and behavioral health providers, which support the operations of school-based health centers.

#### **Proposed \$4 Million Cut to the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission**

The Commission has been critical in expanding school-based health center capacity across the state. School-based health centers provide primary care, behavioral health services, and dental services to low-income children in public schools. The Commission has supported school-based health centers by providing much needed start-up funding to establish new school-based health centers and expand critical services in existing centers.

The Commission has also taken responsibility for the essential role of staffing the Council on the Advancement of School-Based Health Center. This Council is charged with developing State agency policy to ensure school-based health centers have the opportunity to grow and become integrated with the broader health care system.

#### **Proposed 2% Rate Reduction for Behavioral Health Providers**

By design, school-based health centers are located in schools with high concentrations of poverty and act as a safety net provider, particularly for students who experience barriers to accessing health care services in the community. Through leveraging additional funding, including Medicaid reimbursement, school-based health centers have been able to improve access and quality of care for youth, particularly hard-to-reach and underserved populations and become a key component of the safety net. This is illustrated by recent data showing that during the 2017-2018 school year, nearly one-third of the over 52,000 visits provided in school-based health centers were for behavioral health



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services<sup>1</sup>. Without a sufficient reimbursement rate from Medicaid, many school-based health centers would not be sustainable.

For these reasons, we would request that funding reductions in the BRFA to the Commission and Behavioral Health Providers be restored.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at [rfaulkner@policypartner.net](mailto:rfaulkner@policypartner.net) or (410) 693-4000.

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<sup>1</sup> Demonstrating the Value of School-Based Health Centers in Maryland: A Roadmap. Tanya Schwartz, MPP, MSW and Megan Thomas, MPP. Harbage Consulting for The Maryland Community Health Resources Commission and the Council for the Advancement of School-Based Health Centers November 1, 2019.