



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 3, 2020

Senate Bill 367: State Department of Education – Guidelines on Trauma-Informed Approach

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 367: State Department of Education – Guidelines on Trauma-Informed Approach.

This legislation would establish the Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative in the State Department of Education to expand the use of the trauma-informed approach used in schools and intensively train schools on becoming trauma-informed schools; requiring the Department to develop and distribute certain guidelines and to develop a website on the trauma informed approach; requiring, on or before July 1, 2020, the Department to select one school each from certain areas to receive intensive training on the trauma-informed approach; etc.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

Maryland law states that "many rural communities in the State face a host of difficult challenges relating to persistent unemployment, poverty, changing technological and economic conditions, an aging population and an out-migration of youth, inadequate access to quality housing, health care and other services, and deteriorating or inadequate transportation, communications, sanitations, and economic development infrastructure." (West's Annotated Code of Maryland, State Finance and Procurement § 2-207.8b)

This legislation would expand on the use of a trauma-informed approach within school systems and consequently address some of the effects of trauma on the health of our children. MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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