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MAYOR

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HB1528

March 11, 2020

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1528—Maryland Council on Health in All Policies Establishment

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1528.

According to America’s Health Rankings, Maryland is the 18th healthiest state in the United States.¹ Among our highest ranked categories are prevalence of tobacco use and children living in poverty, while some of our weakest categories are in health disparities, drug-related deaths, and infant mortality. It is now well established that all aspects of life affect our health—from someone sneezing near us to the layout of our city roads. As such, the consideration of health concerns must lie beyond just the health sector alone.

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that encourages cross-sector strategy with the goal of considering the health impacts in every policy. This approach ensures that all government agencies consider upstream effects of policies that are both direct (e.g., cigarette taxes to discourage use) and indirect (e.g., zoning laws making communities more pedestrian friendly).²

¹ America’s Health Rankings: Annual Report. Accessed at:
<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Overall/state/MD>

² Tonelli, M et al. Canada needs a “Health in All Policies Action Plan now.” *CMAJ*. 20 Jan 2020. Accessed at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6970602/>

California enacted the HiAP approach in 2010 with a task force and has seen phenomenal results. In America's Health Rankings, they moved from being ranked 26th healthiest in 2010 to 10th in 2019.³ Among some of its largest achievements, California's HiAP task force helped make it easier for state correctional facilities to purchase locally grown, healthier foods. In addition, California's HiAP task force has encouraged inter-agency coordination and successfully advocated for health equity.⁴

While Maryland ranks in the top half of America's Health Rankings, we still have room for great improvement. The formation of an Maryland HiAP council will allow us to address some of our weaknesses (e.g. health inequity) across multiple government agencies. Altogether, this legislation is vital for a healthier Maryland.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1528.

³ America's Health Rankins: Annual Report. Accessed at:

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Overall/state/CA>

⁴ Incorporating Health into Policymaking across Sectors: The California Health in All Policies Initiative. May 2018.

Accessed at: <http://sgc.ca.gov/programs/hiap/>