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State Superintendent of Schools

Environmental Affairs

BILL: Senate Bill 278 DATE: January 20, 2021

SUBJECT: State Department of Education **COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and

and Maryland Department of Health – Maryland School Based

Health Center Standards –

Telehealth

POSITION: Information Only

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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding Senate Bill (SB) 278 – State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health – Maryland School-Based Center Standards – Telehealth, which specifies that the MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) will authorize a health care practitioner as defined in §1-1001 of the Health Occupations Article at a school-based health center approved by the State Department of Education and the MDH to operate in the State to provide health care services through telehealth in accordance with Title 1 Subtitle 10 of the Health Occupations Act. The bill further states that the MSDE and the MDH may not require a school-based health center to submit an application or seek approval to provide health care services through telehealth if the MSDE and the MDH have already approved the school-based health center to operate in the State. Additionally, the bill requires that the State not establish requirements that a school-based health center must meet to provide telehealth that are inconsistent with the requirements for providing telehealth under Title 1, Subtitle 10 of the Health Occupations Act. The bill also requires that on or before July 1, 2021, the MSDE and the MDH revise the Maryland school-based health center standards to conform to the requirements and prohibitions previously stated.

MSDE has continued to advocate for health services that supplement the mandated school health services program in the State and supports the work of school-based health centers in Maryland.

However, there are critical safeguards that are entrenched in the current monitoring and review process regarding the establishment of school-based health centers in Maryland. With the provisions in this legislation that remove the application and approval process for school-based health centers providing telehealth services, the bill would remove the significant oversight of all school-based health centers in the State that MSDE provides, and the review that MDH conducts of all telehealth hardware to determine its efficacy for use with students.

Senate Bill 278 - State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health - Maryland School Based Health Center Standards – Telehealth Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs January 20, 2021

This bill would allow school-based health centers to provide telehealth at a distant site while the child is in the home, without notifying the MSDE, MDH, or any local school-based leadership. The current process requires that the sponsor of the telehealth service complete a one-page form signifying a change to the delivery of services (telehealth) with a signature of the local superintendent of schools. If the MDH and the MSDE would no longer be allowed to establish any requirements for the provision of telehealth in currently approved school-based health centers, there would be no way of monitoring whether the equipment and provider are appropriate.

MSDE remains committed to supporting the expansion of school-based health centers and the use of telehealth. We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 278**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.