



primary care coalition

making
health care
happen

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TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley and members, Finance Committee

FROM: Hillery Tsumba, Director, Organizational Strategy, Primary Care Coalition

DATE: March 31, 2022

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT – HB 1082, Public Health – Consumer Health Information – Hub and Requirements**

The Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County (PCC) works with clinics, hospitals, health care providers, and other community partners to coordinate health services for our most vulnerable neighbors. The PCC administers a variety of programs that provide a continuum of health care services for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured, ethnically diverse individuals including Montgomery County's health safety-net programs—Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids—which together serve the health care needs of some 30,000 low-income individuals. The PCC supports HB 1082 and recommends its passage.

The Montgomery Cares program serves a population that speaks over 40 different languages, with over 70% speaking Spanish. While PCC is proud to deliver a program to such a diverse population, it is not without its challenges. "Some of the greatest disparities in health literacy occur among racial and ethnic minority groups from different cultural backgrounds and those who do not speak English as a first language."¹ Adding on to this challenge, uninsured individuals are also "at higher risk of having low health literacy."¹ We also know these challenges are not unique to the Montgomery Cares safety net. Passage HB1082 will help programs like Montgomery Cares address health literacy barriers by providing professional resources and tools to address our constituents' needs.

The "Health Literacy in The 50 States Report" finds states with higher literacy scores also have lower rates of diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.² In this report Maryland scored a median health IQ of 138 and was ranked 34 (out of the 50 states) overall. Improving health literacy is a strong step toward improving people's quality of life and strengthening community safety nets. For these reasons, PCC urges the Committee to vote in favor of HB 1082.

¹ Health Literacy <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/health-literacy> accessed on March 3, 2022

² Health Literacy In The 50 States - A Report For 21st Century Health. (2019, January 31). Health IQ. <https://www.healthiq.com/blog/health-literacy-report/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hillery Tumba". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "H" and a trailing flourish.

Hillery Tumba
Director, Organizational Strategy
Primary Care Coalition