



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
House Bill 1082
Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements
March 31, 2022
Favorable

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on House Bill 1082. The bill designates the University of Maryland (UMCP) Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy as the State's Consumer Health Information Hub.

Health literacy is now a central focus of national health objectives. Last year, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion within the US Department of Health and Human Services released [Healthy People 2030](#). This fifth iteration of the Healthy People initiative features research and leading health indicators that assess the overall health and well-being of the Nation. The overarching goal: ***“Eliminate health disparities, achieve health equity, and attain health literacy to improve the health and well-being of all.”*** Moreover, the initiative updates definitions of health literacy to include both the importance of individual skills and the role that organizations like the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy play in equitably empowering the acquisition and use of health information.

House Bill 1082, by designating UMCP as the state’s Consumer Health Information Hub, opens the door to multidisciplinary teams of expert health literacy researchers, consultants, and practitioners who remain dedicated to improving individual and population health by making health information easy to understand and use.

Unquestionably, health literacy requires integrated intervention by both the governments and individuals. Moreover, university faculty, staff and students have a great role in distributing reliable information about disease prevention behaviors. Access to reliable, accurate and consistent information (presented in plain language) is key to promoting public health. House Bill 1082 establishes and promotes health literacy criteria, certifications and best practices.

Thank you for allowing the USM to express our support for House Bill 1082.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

USM Office of Government Relations - Patrick Hogan: phogan@usmd.edu