



**2022 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: SB 331 - Program for Preventing HIV Infection for Rape Victims – Alterations and Repeal of Sunset

COMMITTEE: House – Judiciary Committee

POSITION: Letter of Support

BILL ANALYSIS: SB 331 repeals the termination date of the Pilot Program for Preventing HIV Infection for Rape Victims and repeals the limit on the total annual amount providers and hospitals are entitled to be paid for providing follow-up care, thereby reducing barriers for victims of rape and sexual assault to receive HIV post-exposure prophylaxis and follow up care.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports SB 331. SB 331 codifies the continuation and expansion of *The Pilot Program for Preventing Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection for Rape Victims* established in 2019.¹ SB 331 will create a permanent program that enables victims of rape or sexual assault, and victims of child sexual abuse to access post-exposure prophylaxis treatment and follow-up care, regardless of ability to afford care. This ensures that victims of violent crimes can receive proper care during this period of great vulnerability.

Post-exposure prophylaxis is an evidence-based treatment that prevents transmission of HIV following sexual assault. This treatment course is time sensitive. To maximize efficacy, medication must be administered within 72 hours of exposure to HIV and then continued daily for 28 days.² Victims of sexual assault or victims of child sexual abuse often face many barriers to receiving appropriate and timely care. SB 331 allows this care to be provided without financial burden or potential insurance delays, thereby expediting potentially life-saving treatment when victims are at significant physical and emotional risk and often not able to advocate for themselves.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support for SB 331. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

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¹ S.B. 657, 2019 Reg. Session. (Maryland, 2019). https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/Chapters_noln/CH_431_sb0657t.pdf

² NIH Office of AIDS Research. (2021). Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/post-exposure-prophylaxis-peg>