



TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HOUSE BILL 906

Health Equity Resource Communities – Modifications

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

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Chairman Pendergrass and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 906, and special thank you to Del. Jazz Lewis for sponsoring the bill. Thanks to the Committee's leadership, the Health Equity Resource Act passed in 2021 and the Pathways to Health Equity Program is underway, with projects in nine communities across the state selected by the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) last week to receive funding to reduce health disparities for their residents. HB 906 provides some technical changes to make the program stronger, including ensuring that the state's health information exchange has resources to assist with data needs, that the Pathways Program projects have enough time to get started before the Health Equity Resource Communities RFP opens, and that the program is fully staffed at CHRC. We commend the CHRC for how it is implementing the program so far, and with these technical changes the Health Equity Resource Act will have its best chance for success. Thank you again to the Committee for your recognized efforts toward improving access to quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders. We urge a favorable report from the Committee on House Bill 906.