



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 13, 2023

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair, House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 310 - Investment in Communities With Low- to Moderate-Income Households

Dear Chair Barve:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 310, which would require the Department of the Environment to develop policies and recommendations guiding the mandatory minimum spending to benefit low- to moderate -income communities. Undoing the effects of generations of disinvestment and unequal resources in communities around the state is critical for a comprehensive approach to bolster success on the state's population health and health equity strategies.

Maryland hospitals care for millions of people each year, around-the-clock. In addition to the care they provide, they continuously evaluate factors inside and outside of their organizations to promote the health and the well-being of the populations they serve and the tens of thousands they employ. Hospitals are committed to addressing the social drivers of health, which includes cross-sector collaboration and investments in the community.

Maryland is consistently identified as one of the richest states in the nation, with a median household income of approximately \$90,000 – well above the national average according to U.S. News and World Report.¹ However, the state also has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest rates of income inequality. Marginalized communities in Maryland struggle with social and economic adversity. Access to educational opportunities, affordable housing, reliable transportation, healthy food, safe play spaces, and health care, are not equally distributed throughout the state. To fully address the systemic issues facing many of Maryland's communities, and meaningfully improve the health of all Marylanders, issues beyond direct medical care must be considered.

Because environmental, economic and social factors play a role in determining health outcomes and contributing to health inequities², we urge a *favorable* report on HB 310.

For more information, please contact:
Brian Sims, Vice President, Quality & Equity
Bsims@mhaonline.org

¹ Fitzgerald, Madeline. (October 7, 2022). *The 10 Richest States in America*. Usnews.com

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). [NCHHSTP Social Determinants of Health \(SDH\) Frequently Asked Questions](#).