



Maryland  
Hospital Association

January 25, 2024

To: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 203 - Housing Innovation Pilot Program and Housing Innovation Fund - Establishment (Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2024)

Dear Chair Feldman:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 203, which would improve access to quality, affordable, and stable housing in Maryland—contributing to better health outcomes.

Maryland hospitals care for millions of people each year, around-the-clock. In addition to the care they provide, they 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 housing.

The Department of Health and Human Services defines housing insecurity as high housing costs in proportion to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhoods, overcrowding, or homelessness.<sup>1</sup> As an important social determinant of health, housing security must be addressed when developing goals for accessibility or quality of care. Unstable housing can increase the risk of infectious or chronic disease and exacerbate previously existing health conditions.<sup>2</sup>

SB 203 would help local housing authorities increase the production of affordable housing units by providing loans to local housing authorities for mixed-income, cross-subsidized housing and increase the volume of housing production.

Housing is one of the best-researched social determinants of health, and addressing housing insecurity has been found to improve health outcomes and decrease health care costs.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 203.

For more information, please contact:  
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<sup>1</sup> Cutts, D. B., Meyers, A. F., Black, M. M., Casey, P. H., Chilton, M., Cook, J. T., Geppert, J., Ettinger de Cuba, S., Heeren, T., Coleman, S., Rose-Jacobs, R. Frank, D. A. (2011). US Housing insecurity and the health of very young children. *American journal of public health*, 101(8), 1508-14. Retrieved from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134514/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134514/)

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, L. (2018). Housing and Health: An Overview of the Literature. *Health Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577/>.