



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
101 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill (HB) 39 – Public Health - Prohibition on Transfer of Human Immunodeficiency Virus - Repeal – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Clippinger and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this Letter of Support for House Bill (HB) 39 – Public Health - Prohibition on Transfer of Human Immunodeficiency Virus - Repeal. This bill would repeal the existing provision under Maryland law that criminalizes certain actions involving the transfer of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The bill reflects a shift in public health policy that emphasizes science-based approaches to HIV prevention and treatment rather than punitive measures, which have historically perpetuated stigma and deterred individuals from seeking care and testing.

The Department recognizes that the current statute disproportionately impacts marginalized communities and does not align with the evidence-based strategies that prioritize education, prevention, and treatment to address HIV transmission effectively. Medical advancements, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and antiretroviral therapy (ART), have significantly reduced transmission risks, underscoring the need for laws that reflect the current understanding of HIV prevention and management.

The Department supports HB 39 as part of ongoing efforts to reduce HIV stigma, advance health equity, and align Maryland's public health policies with current best practices in HIV prevention and care. These changes will enable Maryland to better support individuals living with HIV while addressing systemic barriers to effective public health interventions.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH
Secretary

