



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3, 2026

HB1109 – Public Health Reform Act

Madame Vice Chair and members of the Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1109.

The Commission on Public Health was established by HB214 in 2023 with a charge to assess gaps in Maryland’s public health infrastructure and make recommendations to address the needs it found to the General Assembly and the Administration. The Commission completed its initial work in 2025 and issued its prescribed report in October of that year. HB1109 seeks to implement some of the recommendations described in the report, extend the lifespan of the Commission, and create the framework to realize the vision of an integrated, world-class public health system.

The initial Commission report highlighted the need for investment in personnel across the public health workforce. HB1109 creates two new mechanisms designed to alleviate some of the strain resulting from shortages: a Public Health Workforce Investment Fund, a dedicated pool of State money set aside for the training and education of health professionals; and the Maryland Medical Reserve Corps, a volunteer service that will supplement the work of on-the-clock professionals during crises such as disease outbreaks and natural disasters.

HB1109 also modernizes the code to improve efficiency and accountability at the local level. The bill streamlines the process by which local health departments contract with providers and vendors by expediting the MDH approval process for contracts related to service provision and requires MDH to develop electronic health records systems in tandem with local departments to improve coordination. Additionally, HB1109 prohibits heads of local departments from receiving compensation for concurrent service on the board of a hospital.

The Commission report highlighted several key areas of need, including equity and information technology. To that end, HB1109 requires DLS to assess and communicate the health equity impacts of proposed legislation, and adds the Secretary of Information Technology as a member, adding expertise needed to evaluate existing information technology protocols. Most importantly, the bill expands the charge of the Commission and extends its work to 2028 to evaluate progress and make further recommendations to fully accomplish the goal of a responsive, efficient, quality health care system for all Marylanders.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1109.