

MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Serving Maryland and Delaware



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TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Members, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Larry Hogan Administration

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 27, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT ONLY IF AMENDED** – House Bill 152 – *Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020*

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC) is the federally designated Primary Care Association for Delaware and Maryland Health Centers. Its members consist of community, migrant and homeless health centers, local non-profit and community-owned healthcare programs, including all of Maryland's federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). MACHC's members provide health care services to the medically underserved and uninsured. MACHC is built on helping our members in the delivery of accessible, affordable, cost effective, and quality primary health care to those in need. MACHC **supports only if amended** House Bill 152. MACHC wishes to register both its strong support for the Community Health Resource Commission (CHRC) and its strong opposition to the provisions of House Bill 152 that alter the funding formula for the CHRC that places the statutorily defined funding requirements for the Commission at risk and therefore potentially jeopardizes the critically important work of the Commission.

Throughout its existence, MACHC has worked collaboratively with the CHRC to achieve its objective of expanding access to high quality health care services to all Maryland residents. The grants provided by the CHRC have been invaluable in both serving the needs of the communities associated with the grant project and as a means to identify successful and sustainable approaches to addressing access challenges that can be replicated in other underserved communities. Furthermore, the grant funds awarded by the CHRC have enabled the grantees to leverage millions of additional dollars in federal and private funding to supplement the State's investment. The return on investment for the State is notable.

The Commission is required to be funded at \$8 million per year and that funding comes from revenues paid by CareFirst to fund not only the Commission but the Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program (SPDAP). The CHRC is currently mandated to receive \$8 million in funding with the balance of the funding from CareFirst attributed to the SPDAP. To date, the funding from CareFirst has been sufficient to fully fund both the CHRC and SPDAP. In fact, SPDAP has not ever utilized all of the funds available to it from the fund. Despite that fact, House Bill 152 proposes to reprioritize the CareFirst funds by funding the SPDAP before funding the CHRC. This puts the CHRC at risk of not receiving its full appropriation.

MACHC strongly believes the CHRC will continue to be a vital and critical component of Maryland's commitment to address health care access and disparity issues while ensuring that high quality health care services are accessible to all Marylanders. MACHC strongly requests the deletion of the provision in House Bill 152 that changes the funding formula.

For more information call:

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"The Voice of Communities In Need"