

**House Bill 152
BUDGET RECONCILIATION AND FINANCING ACT**

**House Appropriations Committee
February 27, 2020**

Oppose

Catholic Charities of Baltimore opposes the provisions in HB 152 that would reduce funding for providers who are serving vulnerable populations in Maryland.

Inspired by the gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. As the largest human service provider in Maryland working with tens of thousands of Marylanders each year, and an employer of over 2,000 people, we recognize the dignity of every individual.

We are committed to a Maryland where each person has the opportunity to reach his or her God-given potential. We fulfill this commitment as a provider of behavioral health, long term care and developmental disabilities services in partnership with the State. Our commitment to moving away from residential services and building our community based services has been completely aligned with the direction the State has moved. However, the chronic underfunding of providers and the unpredictability in rates has made it difficult for us and other providers to offer the high quality programming that these vulnerable populations deserve.

Medicaid Provider Funding

For years, Medicaid providers have been struggling to keep up with changes in best practices, the demands of our workforce and the desire to provide the highest quality of services to Marylanders. Last year, the legislature included 4% rate increases for Medicaid providers in the minimum wage bill. Programs used that promise to plan for the future. Unfortunately, HB 152 proposes to cut that increase to 2%. This would result in a \$1 million reduction in payments for Catholic Charities alone. It jeopardizes our ability to continue providing the same quantity of programming at the same level of service which is a disservice to the vulnerable Marylanders we serve. *We urge the committee to strike the language on page 16 line 4 through page 17 line 15.*

Community Health Resources Commission

Catholic Charities has partnered with the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) on numerous projects over the past 10 years. We have seen firsthand the transformative effect a grant from the CHRC can have on a program. \$350,000 in CHRC grants to our Esperanza Center allowed us to leverage an additional \$821,000 in private grants. This funding allowed the health center to completely revamp their model of care while expanding service delivery from 17 hours per week to 28. The CHRC grant process allows programs like ours to work outside the constructs of Medicaid funding to build capacity to serve underserved communities. *We urge the committee to strike the language on page 17 line 16 through page 18 line 8; page 19 lines 13-32; page 20 lines 1-14*

The proposed cuts to health care providers and CHRC funding will be detrimental to the communities we serve. **Catholic Charities of Baltimore urges the committee to either strike the sections listed above or in the alternative to issue an unfavorable report for HB 152.** Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Submitted By: Kevin Keegan, Director of Family Services