



March 4, 2020

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House Bill 1540 – Environment and Transportation – Mold Inspections – Standards, Reporting, and Penalties

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, Delegate Henson for sponsoring, and members of the committee for hearing House Bill 1540 and allowing me to come here before you today.

As providers and health systems collect data on social determinants of health, we work towards better aligning social determinants of health risks with appropriate interventions and initiatives. Respiratory health risks, and certain respiratory diseases, are proven to be exacerbated in damp environments that pose threats for in-home mold growth. In our young and vulnerable children exposed to in-home mold and living in at-risk environments, we see needless suffering through significant respiratory consequences when compared to children not exposed to these risks. Unfortunately, children severely at-risk often reside in older and/ or low-income housing, lacking in the quality and safety precautions afforded to higher-income residents. An Institute of Medicine study has indicated an up to 50% increased association of coughing, wheezing, and asthma for residents of damp and mold-infested environments. During winter season, it is not uncommon for us to have families requesting physician support in their demands to landlords for better oversight and addressing mold remediation in their homes. Evidenced-based practices and research offer several solutions, including regulation and remediation for in-home mold. Identifying these at-risk environments and individuals allows us as providers to intervene and treat at earlier stages, decreasing the structural pulmonary changes that can occur in prolonged exposure. Additionally, schools that increased interventions towards mold and structural repairs indicated lower levels of asthma and respiratory distress in their students, reducing the otherwise unnecessary absences we see in these diseased individuals.

As a physician who cares for our vulnerable pediatric patients, I am proud to support a bill that not only requires annual indoor air quality reports but also outlines penalties and remediation necessities to guarantee action. This helps ensure that children living in high-risk environments have a fair chance to the same health outcomes and healthcare cost savings that their counterparts do. Children that are able to thrive in safe, high-quality environments will not suffer from diseases and comorbidities caused by in-home mold exposure; increasing their quality of life and allowing them to prosper at school. In addition to the evidence I've submitted, the President of Anne Arundel Medical Center, Sherry B. Perkins, also supports this bill and has submitted written testimony.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully ask that the Environment and Transportation Committee recommend favorably House Bill 1540.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Chair of Pediatrics, Anne Arundel Medical Center