

March 4, 2020

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.

My name is Andrew McGlone and I am a primary care provider with Anne Arundel Medical Center of Luminis Health. In addition to practicing family medicine for more almost 15 years in Annapolis, I am the Medical Director for Ambulatory Quality and Technology. I am proud to work towards enhancing the health of my patients. As you are aware, there are a multitude of in-home contaminants or products that we know pose an immediate risk to health, including asbestos, radon, lead-based paints, and methane. Several state laws protect Marylanders from the impact of these environmental hazards with marked results. Last year, the Maryland Department of Health released a report indicating a 19% decrease in lead poisoning cases in Baltimore alone, even with increased numbers tested. Given the clear effects of in-home standards and regulations on improving health, I am discouraged by the absence of state laws protecting Marylanders from in-home mold. I am here to support House Bill 1540's efforts to improve the health of Marylanders by creating standards for in-home mold.

Multiple research studies have proven that infants residing in homes with higher “moldiness” indices were at greater risk of developing breathing issues and asthma by age seven¹. Additional analysis published in *Environmental Research* studied the effects of older homes and several allergens on developing children. Older homes without central air conditioning containing carpeting generally score higher on an “Environmental Relative Moldiness Index” scale. This leads to increased risk of asthma in homes inhabited by susceptible, vulnerable populations, by about 2.9 units higher than newer homes. With Maryland having passed the HOME Act last week, I am here not only as a physician but as a proud Baltimorean and Marylander who recognizes the impact of this bill. That said, I look to you to not only ensure the accessibility of homes but also that the condition and safety of homes in our state are such that all residents are given a great quality of life. The status quo not only overlooks the training, knowledge base, and expertise of pulmonologists, physicians, and other public health professionals treating these patients long after the initial, avoidable exposure, but also serves as a disservice and directly places individuals at-risk to immediate and long-term, persistent health hazards. We know that proper enforcement channels, coupled with safe reporting opportunities and statewide regulatory guidelines will help several of our vulnerable populations, including children and elderly exposed to these hazards. Age and condition of homes are surrogates of income and race; as a physician who has driven efforts to improve our social determinants of health reporting, I know there is additional work to be done in the state if we are to ensure, as caregivers, patients are returning to high-quality, safe environments.

¹ Reponen, T., et. Al. (2013). Family and home characteristics correlate with mold in home. *Environmental Research*, 124, 67-70. DOI: 10.1016/j.envres.2013.04.003

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Children that are able to thrive in their home 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 conjunction with the President of Anne Arundel Medical Center, Sherry B. Perkins, who has submitted written testimony, I respectfully ask that the Environment and Transportation Committee recommend favorably House Bill 1540.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew McGlone, MD
Anne Arundel Medical Center