



February 16, 2020

Senator Malcolm L. Augustine  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Augustine and members of the committee:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write to urge your support for SB716, Maryland Council on Health in All Policies - Establishment. This legislation will establish a council to identify opportunities for the state to improve the health of Marylanders using a health in all policies approach. SB716 is an important step in towards reducing health disparities and ensuring that all Marylanders benefit from improvements in the social factors that impact health. We urge your support for this legislation as it is considered in committee this week.

The Health in All Policy (HiAP) is an approach that encourages the consideration of health in all decision making, especially public policy. In July 2011, the Institute of Medicine (National Academy of Medicine) recommended that federal, state, and local decision makers adopt HiAP. At the federal level, the interagency National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council was created with HiAP in mind; the council's 2011 National Prevention Strategy is a roadmap to better health that draws in health determinants affected by diverse sectors of government. HiAP systematically introduces a community-based, holistic understanding of health into decision-making processes for both public- and private-sector activities. It establishes health and well-being as a priority, recognizing that it is the ultimate outcome of economic, social, and political conditions. Widespread HiAP could raise public awareness of the broad scope of factors affecting health, emphasize the links between our nation's health and its economic and social strength, and help policymakers elevate health considerations to the same plane as other outcomes of concern.

In 2017 Maryland SB340 established a work group that recommended last year that a health in all policies framework be developed and a health in all policies council be created. SB716 is being proposed to implement that important recommendation.

As an organization dedicated to achieving health equity, we applaud the legislatures efforts to establish a cross government council to better understand and leverage the opportunities for health improvement. Thank you again for your attention to our position on this important legislation. We look forward to your committees work to enact this and other legislation to reduce barriers that contribute to health inequities in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, M.D.  
Executive Director