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## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Testimony in Support of HB 409 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Participation of School-Based Health Centers – Regulations**

Good afternoon, Chairman Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman and honorable members of the Finance committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present HB 409, **Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Participation of School-Based Health Centers – Regulations**.

Passage of this bill would facilitate the expansion of School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in the state by increasing the agencies that could receive Medicaid reimbursements. In order for that to happen, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must revise its regulations by creating a provider code that would allow for a facility that does not qualify as a free-standing clinic under Federal guidelines to be reimbursed. This is something that is already done in many, if not most, other states.

The request for MDH to revise the regulations to meet increasing needs of students and families dates back to 2017. As we, as a legislature, have begun to recognize the value of SBHCs as a part of our state's comprehensive approach to community health, we have been working to expand their number. This can be best accomplished by allowing the kinds of agencies that we have previously defined in statute, going back to 2006, as meeting the standards of practice, be able to bill Medicaid. These agencies include community health centers, hospitals, private medical practices and university medical centers.

In the 2019 Blueprint for Excellence in Education, MDH and MSDE were charged with identifying specific ways to expand the types of sponsoring agencies. They formed a joint ad-hoc work group and produced a report that defines the characteristics of an acceptable sponsoring agency, but did not address the Medicaid reimbursement issue. This legislation will enable the work that needs to be done, which is creating an appropriate billing code and then adding that code to the Medicaid software, to be completed. As a result, additional sponsoring agencies could be considered as early as January 2021.

In our Total Cost of Care Model, we put a great deal of faith in our community providers—SBHCs are a proven model for addressing the needs of those children who are affected by poverty and can be an even better resource to us as we strive to meet our financial savings requirements under that model. The implementation of this bill will take us in that direction.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. On behalf of youngsters in our state, I respectfully request a favorable report.