



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Health and Government Operations Committee

February 4, 2020

House Bill 259: Health Occupations – Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment of Patients -
Disciplinary Actions (The Patient’s Access to Integrative Healthcare Act of 2020)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Delegate Szeliga, Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 259: Health Occupations–Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment of Patients- Disciplinary Actions (The Patient’s Access to Integrative Healthcare Act of 2020)

This legislation would prohibit a health occupations board from disciplining a certain health care practitioner under certain circumstances because of the health care practitioner’s use of a certain diagnostic evaluation or treatment of a patient; authorizing a health occupations board to discipline a certain health care practitioner if the board determines that the diagnostic evaluation, testing, or treatment has a significant safety risk greater than conventional methods and that the risk is not outweighed by potential benefits: etc.

MRHA’s mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland’s land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland’s 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

Maryland law states that “many rural communities in the State face a host of difficult challenges relating to persistent unemployment, poverty, changing technological and economic conditions, an aging population and an out-migration of youth, inadequate access to quality housing, health care and other services, and deteriorating or inadequate transportation, communications, sanitations, and economic development infrastructure.” (West’s Annotated Code of Maryland, State Finance and Procurement § 2-207.8b)

MHRA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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