

TO: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Mary Clapsaddle
Director, State Affairs

DATE: February 5, 2020

Johns Hopkins is pleased to provide testimony in support of **HB 409 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Participation of School-based Health Centers – Regulations**. Changes to Medicaid regulations will expand the scope of eligible sponsoring organizations of School-based Health Centers (SBHC) to be reimbursed by Medicaid.

The Kirwan Commission has recognized the importance of school based somatic and mental health services for students and their families and the linkages to student academic success. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future dedicates more than \$50 million in each FY2020 and FY2021 to support community schools and provision of health services in schools with concentrations of poverty; 219 schools in 15 jurisdictions will receive these grants because they exceed the poverty threshold of 80% of students eligible for free-and-reduced-price meals.

Johns Hopkins is proud of the work being done through the Rales Center at Baltimore's KIPP Academy. The Rales Health Center employs Johns Hopkins nurses to staff the school health services branch in addition to the physician, nurse practitioner, medical office assistant, and family advocate who staff the clinic. The dedicated team strives to integrate their care with the care provided by the child's primary care physician in a way that's as seamless as possible for parents.

These types of on-site, readily available health services reduce absenteeism for students, and parents can reduce instances of missing work for a child's doctor appointment. On-site health professionals are particularly important in parts of Baltimore City, where rates of chronic conditions such as asthma are more than twice the national average. The Baltimore City Health Department reports that the city's pediatric asthma hospitalization rate is the highest in Maryland and one of the highest in the U.S.¹

As the sponsor of a success SBHC, Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable report on HB 409**.

cc: Delegate Bonnie Cullison
Members, Health and Government Operations Committee

¹ Baltimore City Health Department Report, 2018: <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/node/454>