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HB1557-Public Schools-Health Services-County Board of Education and Health Departments

POSITION: SUPPORT with Amendments- 3/4/2020

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee-

I am writing to you in support of HB1557 with amendments. There is position in this bill for a Health Specialist in MDH and MSDE. The current staff within these two departments who provide the general oversight for School Health Services in Maryland are very minimally staffed to ensure an effective school health model for all students in Maryland.

The MD School Health Guidelines should be updated and revised frequently to provide overall clinical and administrative guidance to district school health offices. The few School Health Guidelines that have been updated and are currently in place have all been legislated. Physicians, parents and community practitioners should be able to look at up-to-date, online system and understand how a student with a certain clinical condition will access care and help in school. There are very few protocols and specific guidance like these in our current guidelines.

There are many States around us and in the US that have clinical and administrative protocols and policies online in a Handbook resource through the State of Education's website. This language should be added to the bill to ensure that the new Health Specialist Coordinator position must revise and update these guidelines frequently to follow the standards of care recommended by NASN and AAP.

By not revising and updating these guidelines on a State level, districts are writing their own protocols and delegation guidelines. This can be problematic as all districts may not follow the same recommendations leaving physicians and parents without consistent school health care from district to district.

Furthermore, school health service professionals who work in nonpublic and private schools in Maryland often look to the School Health Guidelines on MSDE's website as a framework to build the school protocols. Many of these schools do not have a physician readily available to them for consult like public school districts do.

I urge a favorable report for HB1557, with these suggested amendments, to ensure school health guideline consistency and up to date, ongoing guidance from the Health Specialist Positions in Maryland.

Respectfully Submitted,

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