



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 9, 2021

To: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 850 - Higher Education- Maryland Corps Program Fund - COVID-19 Emergency Funding Priorities

Dear Chair McIntosh:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 850.

March 4 marked one year since hospitals in Maryland began to see their first COVID-19 inpatients. In that time, they have admitted more than 35,000 of our family members, friends, and neighbors, who sadly have been affected by this virus, and cared for many more in their emergency departments and outpatient facilities. One year later, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a heavy toll on Maryland's health care infrastructure.

The challenges posed by COVID-19 will continue to evolve and require the state to continually assess and adjust plans as they develop data-informed responses that suit their own unique circumstances, challenges, and the needs of communities. HB 850 prioritizes funding through the Maryland Corps Program Fund to individuals who serve in agencies directly involved in the response to and recovery from COVID-19.

State and local health agencies have significant experience in employing case-based strategies to lessen the spread of infectious disease. Scaling these efforts to the unprecedented levels needed to respond to a public health emergency requires an expanded, well-trained workforce that builds on existing state disease investigation capacity; adequate systems to monitor and support infected individuals and contacts; consultation and technical assistance; and social resources for cases and contacts to ensure compliance with public health guidance.

The COVID-19 pandemic tested the strength of our state's public health system. The support offered in this legislation to shore up our state's public health and emergency management systems will speed our recovery and see our way through this unprecedented health emergency while preparing for the future.

For these reasons we urge a *favorable report* on HB 850.

For more information, please contact:
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