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Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Chair*

Government Operations and  
Health Facilities Subcommittee

*House Chair*

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
Executive, and Legislative Review



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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Appropriations Committee

In Support Of

**House Bill 1043**

**Local Health Services – Funding and Infrastructure**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

We actively prepare for emergencies that threaten our State, such as natural disasters, hazards, and terrorist attacks.<sup>1</sup> The State invests significant amount of funding in mitigating the impacts of these and other dangers.

However, what we have learned from the last 12 months is that we were inadequately prepared to deal with a public health crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the necessity of what a robust public health infrastructure can accomplish when called upon. But it needs to have the appropriate funding to ensure it can accomplish its goals. That is what this legislation does.

House Bill 1043 would repeal the current Section 2-302 of the Health – General Article and replace it with language stating what the Governor must include in the budget bill. Starting in FY2032, the Governor would have to make a general fund appropriation of at least \$67 million for local health services.

In subsequent years, the Governor must appropriate at least the same amount as the immediate prior year and is required to increase the amount by at least the percentage by which the projected total general fund revenues for the upcoming fiscal year exceed the revised estimate of total general fund revenues for the current fiscal year.

The American Rescue Plan is a potential source of funding for the provisions of this bill. Under Subtitle F, Section 2501, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Emergency Management Agency, March 5, 2021 “MEMA Secures \$19.3 Million to Prepare for and Reduce Risks of Hazards, Disasters, Terrorist Attacks,” <https://news.maryland.gov/mema/2021/03/05/mema-secures-19-3-million-to-prepare-for-and-reduce-risks-of-hazards-disasters-terrorist-attacks/>

may award grants to State and local public health departments “related to establishing, expanding, and sustaining a public health workforce.”

We must learn the lesson the last year has taught us. In most instances, our local health departments bear the brunt of a public health emergency and implement a response.

The money we appropriate demonstrates what we value. By ensuring adequate funding for local health services, we refocus the efforts of the State to ensure public safety, in all forms.

I urge the committee to act favorably on House Bill 1043.

March 16, 2021