



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

<b>BILL:</b>	<b>SB 563 – Local Health Departments – Funding</b>
<b>SPONSOR:</b>	<b>Senator Griffith</b>
<b>HEARING DATE:</b>	<b>February 17, 2021</b>
<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Budget and Taxation</b>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411</b>
<b>POSITION:</b>	<b>SUPPORT</b>

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 563**, which increases the statewide allocation for local health department core funding to \$70,000,000 in FY23, \$80,000,000 in FY24, and establishes criteria for adjustments in future fiscal years based on inflation and population growth. **SB 563** also adds three programmatic areas to core funding requirements – data management, provision of personal protective equipment, and preparing for public health emergencies.

In FY97 the Prince George's County Health Department (PGCHD) received \$6.5 million in state core funds; yet a decade later in FY19, PGCHD received only \$6.4 million.<sup>1</sup> In the same period, the County's population grew by 25% resulting in an effective reduction in per capita spending of \$1.87.<sup>2</sup> The Great Recession led to a 35% reduction in local health department core funds in FY09, wiping out the modest funding increases made post-FY97. In FY13 all other affected state agencies had this core funding restored– but local health departments were never made whole.

**SB 563** would increase PGCHD's core funding allocation to \$9.4 million in FY23 and \$10.7 million in FY24.<sup>3</sup> This investment in local public health is overdue. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the danger of chronically underfunding public health. PGCHD lacked the staff and resources needed to respond and was forced to augment an overworked, underpaid workforce with expensive temporary workers.

Effective management of a population's health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires significant investment in health information technology. Without this essential infrastructure, our health department does not have the real-time data and analysis necessary for

<sup>1</sup> FY97 - \$6,578,585; FY19 - \$6,450,044

<sup>2</sup> 1990 Census – 729,268; 2019 American Community Survey – 909,308  
\$8.91/resident based on 1990 census, \$7.04/resident based on 2019 ACS

<sup>3</sup> Per the legislation, state core total allocation in FY11-12 was \$37,283,484, of which Prince George's County received \$5,007,057 (13.4%). Applying the same proportional allocation to the proposed \$70 and \$80 million in FY23 and FY24, PGCHD would receive about \$9.4 million in FY23 and \$10.7 million in FY24.

swift public health action. A comprehensive core investment can end the use of antiquated systems. **SB 563** adds this critical programmatic area to core funding – data management and exchange services.

PGCHD now serves almost 1 million residents.<sup>4</sup> We want to equitably and fully meet the needs of our growing population, but it will not be possible without an increase in stable infrastructure funding from the state. For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George’s County Executive strongly **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 563** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

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<sup>4</sup> 2019 American Community Survey