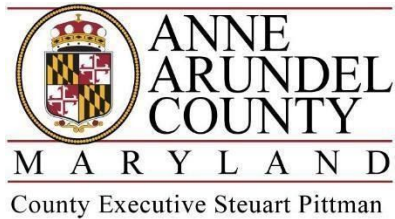


Anne Arundel County_FAV_SB 563.pdf

Uploaded by: Baron, Peter

Position: FAV



February 17, 2021

Senate Bill 563
Local Health Departments - Funding
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical role that Local Health Departments (LHDs) fill as the state's front line for public health services. Recession-driven cuts to LHDs have lingered for years, despite the increasing need for preventive care, immunizations, substance and mental health counseling, communicable disease prevention, and health education. Senate Bill 563 will restore and strengthen LHD funding to support delivery of these vital health services.

The Core Public Health Services funding formula was put into law during the 1995 legislative session in order to establish a minimum level of funding for LHDs and a basis for annual growth. The funding formula underwent a series of dramatic cuts beginning in fiscal year 2009. Although the Governor's fiscal year 2022 budget includes an increase over current year funding, the funding level still remains below the \$67.0 million provided in fiscal year 2008. This bill will rebase the formula to \$80.0 million by fiscal year 2024, in order to approximate the appropriate level of funding for LHDs had the formula not been cut during the Great Recession.

This bill also addresses costly technology changes that have stretched LHD budgets beyond annual inflationary pressure, but have never been recognized in the Core funding formula. In addition to rebasing the Core funding formula, this bill will allow Core funding to be used for data management and exchange services and will require an evaluation of technology services.

The lasting reductions to Core formula funding have threatened the capacity of LHDs, especially since the onset of the pandemic. This bill will help to ensure that LHDs have the support necessary to deliver valuable public health services. **For those reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 563.**

Howard County Bd of Health.Support of SB563.FINAL

Uploaded by: Bashura, MPH, BS, Jason

Position: FAV

February 15, 2021

SB563: "Local Health Departments – Funding"

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of the Howard County Board of Health - and, ultimately, the greater than 325,000 residents of Howard County, MD - I am pleased to offer our overwhelming support in favor of SB563.

In the last 20 years, in the near term aftermath of the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in September, 2001 – when nearly 3000 Americans lost their lives – the U.S. public health infrastructure saw untold growth and renewed focus on providing for increased public health education & training funding streams to develop and exercise public health emergency response plans; fiscal support from the Federal government to be able to perform rapid surveillance, detection, laboratory, response and prevention of disease transmission; all of these activities predicated on the "fear" of another terrorist attack that could take biological or chemical pathways based on threat intelligence that was being evaluated. All of the investments made – however – in the last 20 years have slowly trickled away...

Fast forward 20 years later, as these financial windfalls have been slowly removed, redirected, refocused and otherwise eliminated from local health department (LHD) budgets across this great county, the age-old public health mantra of "*we'll get funding after something happens*" unfortunately came true. The pandemic has exposed the fragile, cobbled together yet tightly woven fabric that local health departments provide to the [nearly 2500 LHDs](#) across the country. This mindset is the epitome of putting a line of ambulances at the bottom of a cliff instead of securing the fence at the top of the cliff.

As is the case in Howard County, LHDs employ critical infrastructure based [public health professionals](#) in a variety of capacities serving our communities. In the wake of the pandemic, public health officials, leadership and in some instances state leadership, [have retired, resigned or quit](#) due to the pressures and – in some instances – personal attacks and threats of violence on these dedicated leaders and their families who are merely trying to PROTECT and preserve the public's health and well-being. The loss of these long-time public health servants can afford those mid-career and opportunity to move on and we need to prepare and embrace these opportunities. These losses will force LHDs to "rebuild from within" as it will take time for the dust to settle and enable us to see what the future will look like.

The potential buoying effect the funds contained within SB563 over the next decade will help to "rebuild the crumbling foundation" of public health infrastructure and sustain us looking forward towards achieving the goals as outlined in [Health People 2030](#). Through helping us to "rebuild the fence at the top of the cliff" LHDs across Maryland can get back to focusing on what we've done and continue to do – protecting, promoting and preserving the public's health and well-being – of our residents, neighbors and families across not only Howard County but all of Maryland.

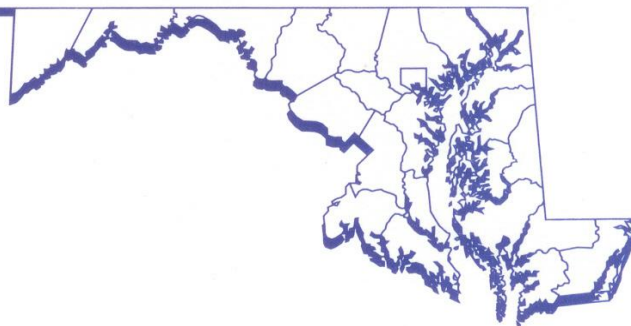
Very Truly Yours

Jason P. Bashura, MPH, RS
Howard County Board of Health, Chairman
203-305-1973

1 - SB 563 - B&T - MACHO - LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Bennardi, Maryland Department of Health /Office of Governmen

Position: FAV



SENATE BILL 563
Local Health Departments – Funding
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
Maura Rossman, MD, Health Officer, Howard County Health Department
For the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO)
Position: Support – February 17, 2021

The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports SB 563. MACHO is the professional association of the chief executives of the state's 24 local public health departments (LHDs).

In the 1995 legislative session, MACHO worked with legislators and state leadership to establish *Core Public Health Services Funding*. This included setting the minimal funding levels and established the formula for growth based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase and population growth. The amount of general funds was set at \$41 million.

Things took a turn in FY09 when Core Funding was cut by almost \$12 million. Fourteen years of inflationary adjustments were wiped out one stroke. In FY10 the Board of Public Works further reduced funding to \$37.3 million and the General Assembly froze the base funding at that level for FY10 and FY11 and did not provide the inflationary increase, though all other entities returned to pre-cut levels in FY13. During that time, interpretation of the inflationary adjustments changed from being compounded annually, as it had been calculated since the inception of the Core Funding formula, to arbitrary annual adjustments.

Although in recent years there have been some additions to Core Funding, the dollar amounts have never compensated for the drastic cuts a decade ago. As a result, LHDs were forced to cut vital staffing, including nurses who monitor and respond to infectious diseases, emergency preparedness personnel, environmental health specialists, and epidemiologists. These cuts have directly impacted the ability of LHDs to optimally respond to the myriad of demands brought on by COVID.

In addition, technology changes unanticipated in 1995 have increased operating costs beyond annual inflationary pressures. Core Funding has never been adjusted to account for hardware and software expenses or the IT personnel to manage multiple data systems. SB 563, for the first time, acknowledges data management costs for LHDs. In addition, the required evaluation of technology, communications and information services used by, provided to or shared or coordinated through local health departments, would provide invaluable information to illustrate current capacity of LHDs to fulfill their delegated, mandated and funded activities with existing IT-related infrastructure.

COVID has demonstrated the value LHDs provide to the residents and businesses of every jurisdiction. SB 563 takes an important step toward appropriate funding for these vital services. For these reasons MACHO strongly encourages support for this critical public health legislation. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, Executive Director, MACHO, at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-614-6891.

SB0563 - Local Health Departments - Funding - Writ

Uploaded by: Carter, Ernest

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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

POSITION: SUPPORT

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.¹ In the same period, the County's population grew by 25% resulting in an effective reduction in per capita spending of \$1.87.² 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 FY24.³ 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 21st 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

¹ FY97 - \$6,578,585; FY19 - \$6,450,044

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

³ 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.⁴ 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.

⁴ 2019 American Community Survey

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0563.pdf

Uploaded by: Conner, Charles

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

CHARLES R. CONNER III, ESQ.
Director of Government Affairs

JOEL N. BELLER
Deputy Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **SB 563**

TITLE: **Local Health Departments - Funding**

SPONSOR: **Senator Griffith**

COMMITTEE: **Budget and Taxation**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 17, 2021**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 563 - Local Health Departments - Funding. This bill would increase State funding for local health departments and would provide for personal protective equipment and resources for emergency response.

Local health departments are on the front lines of the pandemic. It is local health departments that coordinate the supply of personal protective equipment, work to prevent community spread of an easily communicable virus, establish guidelines for the treatment of those who have been infected, and now manage the administration of life-saving vaccines to more than 800,000 residents in Baltimore County alone. Health departments are saving the lives of residents, and moving forward, it is essential that the appropriate resources are dedicated to their efforts.

In the event of another potential widespread health emergency, jurisdictions across the country will once again face limited resources. In these instances, State assistance is critical to ensuring that the right resources get into the right hands. SB 563 not only establishes guidelines for local health departments during emergencies, but guarantees investment from the State of Maryland that is commensurate with the essential services they provide.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 563. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.

SB 563- Local Health Departments- Funding- Letter

Uploaded by: Dorrien, Erin

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 17, 2021

To: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 563- Local Health Departments - Funding

Dear Chair Guzzone:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 563. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for the nation to rethink investments in our public health infrastructure, which has been chronically underfunded. Nationally, public health spending has fallen as proportion of total health spending since approximately 2000 and in inflation-adjusted terms since the Great Recession.¹

Maryland is not unique in its budget gamble, which included cutting the Core Funding Formula for local health departments during the tough economic times of the early 2000s. This funding never rebounded, and the consequences are coming to fruition at perhaps the worst possible time—a once-in-century pandemic. Hospitals and health systems are increasingly partnering with local health departments to support chronic disease management and populational health improvement, but the function of a local health department goes well beyond these endeavors.

SB 563 is a first step to ensure local health departments are properly resourced. Yet, the funding formulas, which were developed in the 1990s, do not account for the changing role of technology in public health, the growing threat of environmental disasters that affect Marylanders' health, and the potential rise of new viruses and other pathogens, like COVID-19. The core capabilities of a robust public health system are vital to respond to public health emergencies – be it COVID-19, substance use disorder or systemic racism and health equity. Local health departments cannot take on the challenges of tomorrow with the funding levels of the past.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 563.

For more information, please contact:
Erin Dorrien, Director, Government Affairs & Policy
Edorrien@mhaonline.org

¹ National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Care Spending In 2016. 2017; cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/Downloads/NHE-Presentation-Slides.pdf

SB563-MdPHA_testimony2021-FNL.pdf

Uploaded by: Eck, Raimee

Position: FAV



Mission: We champion health equity for Marylanders through advocacy and community collaborations.

Vision: Healthy Marylanders Living in Healthy Communities

SB563 Local Health Departments - Funding
Hearing Date: February 17, 2021
Committee: Budget & Taxation
Position: SUPPORT

Thank you Chairman Guzzone and members of the Budget & Taxation Committee for this opportunity. We submit testimony on behalf of the Maryland Public Health Association to express our support for SB563, Local Health Departments - Funding. This bill's purpose is to bolster funding provided to local health departments as well as provide additional frameworks for spending and evaluation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps within our existing public health infrastructure. In May we saw the effects of unprepared public health departments when Chantee Mack, a 44-year-old employee of Prince Georges County Health Department, died of COVID-19 after a suspected exposure at work. More than 20 of her colleagues also caught the virus and have suffered lasting problems. We must provide departments with the support needed to prevent tragedies like this from happening in the future.

The lack of funding to health departments has been made evident throughout the country. In an interview of over 150 public health officials across the nation and an analysis of local and state health departments, it was found that on every level the system is underfunded and under threat. Dr. Redfield, the former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated in an interview that “our nation failed over decades to effectively invest in public health”. While short term remedies have been provided to address the immediate threat of COVID-19 in Maryland, such as relief received through CARES funding, the long-term increased budget laid out in SB563 goes further to address the weaknesses in our current public health infrastructure.

Beginning in FY 2023 \$70,000,000 will be distributed among the counties. This is an increase of approximately \$20,000,000 from the amount laid out in FY 2018. In combination with this increased funding, the bill will improve preparedness through ensuring the security for the future of public health in Maryland by continuing to prohibit funding from dropping below the amount given in the previous year as well as requiring adjustments proportionate to the population growth and inflation.

The provisions surrounding allocation of funds included in SB563 will ensure counties are using the funding to address identified gaps in our public health infrastructure. Through the required funding for providing personal protective equipment and other materials to prepare for potential communicable disease or public health emergencies, the bill protects Maryland and our healthcare workers from outbreaks of communicable diseases and emergencies. Funds will also go towards data management regarding communicable diseases and other health matters in order to monitor the potential for future outbreaks or spikes in cases. Counties compliance with these regulations will be required to be evaluated and reported to the proper commission within the Maryland General Assembly.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB563.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy

Marylanders living in healthy, equitable communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.

SB563- MoCo- Support (GA21).pdf

Uploaded by: Frey, Leslie

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 563

DATE: February 17, 2021

SPONSOR: Senator Griffith

ASSIGNED TO: Budget and Taxation

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Local Health Departments - Funding

Senate Bill 563 would make much needed adjustments to the core funding formula for local health departments. Under the bill, by Fiscal Year 2024 the amount of funding for the critical work performed by local health departments will increase by at least \$20 million over current levels. The bill also adds language to include responses related to communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, for which funding can be used.

The need for more public health funding in Maryland cannot be overstated; this has been the case for at least a decade, and the current pandemic has brought into sharp relief the ways local health departments (LHDs) are an essential element of the health care infrastructure in the state. We cannot afford to hamstring the ability of LHDs to prevent and respond to public health issues.

Among many other programs, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services uses core funding for our disease control program, which is tasked with investigating dozens of communicable diseases and disease outbreaks. The four nurses that we support with core funding for this program are responsible for investigating influenza, legionella, and pneumonia in congregate living facilities, as well as investigating and vaccinating preventable diseases such as measles and pertussis, among many others. Due to the underfunding of the program, the nurses are not able to investigate all reported cases of disease and instead have had to prioritize outbreaks: for example, throughout the ongoing response to COVID-19, investigating cases of Lyme disease had to be put on hold while the program focuses on testing, contact tracing, and vaccinating for COVID-19. With sufficient funding, these nurses could conduct the necessary investigation and follow-up in response to all reported cases of disease, which decreases the need for the additional resources that are necessary if diseases are not properly addressed at the outset. Without funding, human suffering that could be prevented won't be.

Montgomery County, along with every LHD across the state, strongly supports the increase in funding required by Senate Bill 563. We take our responsibility to protect the public's health seriously and work very hard to meet the ever-increasing needs of our communities, during crises and after. We respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 563 to enable us to heed this call.

LeadingAge Maryland - 2021 - SB 563 - LHD Funding(

Uploaded by: Greenfield, Aaron

Position: FAV



6811 Campfield Road
Baltimore, MD 21207

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Budget & Taxation

FROM: LeadingAge Maryland

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 563, Local Health Departments - Funding

DATE: February 17, 2021

POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland writes to request a favorable report on Senate Bill 563, Local Health Departments - Funding.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. We represent more than 120 not-for-profit organizations, including the vast majority of CCRCs in Maryland. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill specifies the amount of funding required to be included in the State budget for local health services for upcoming fiscal years and alters the purposes for which local health department funding may be used to include protective equipment for health care personnel and materials appropriate to prepare for potential communicable disease emergencies.

COVID-19 has revealed the true importance of a strong and sustainable public health infrastructure. Local health departments provide a variety of supports to older adults living in the broader community. Most recently local health departments have been tasked with coordinating on site vaccine clinics for senior housing settings in their jurisdictions. This task has stressed the departments' limited capacity. LeadingAge Maryland works closely with local

health departments which are vital and critical partners regardless of whether there is an ongoing pandemic. These agencies were struggling with resources before COVID-19 and the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. In light of the last year, local health departments deserve sufficient funding to meet their mission.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 563.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992

SB0563-BCHD-B&T-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Mehu, Natasha

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 563

February 17, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: SENATE BILL 563 – Local Health Departments – Funding

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 563.

SB 563 increases the funding for local health departments' core public health services and expands the definition of core public health services to include several new categories including personal protective equipment for staff and information technology needs.

BCA has continually advocated for increased state funding for LHDs realizing these agencies are relied upon to address both day-to-day and acute threats to public health. COVID-19 shines a direct light on the role LHDs play in not only containing pandemics, but also ensuring equitable access to healthcare. Unfortunately, COVID-19 also means that LHDs are very stressed for resources including everything from staff to personal protective equipment to access to medical treatment options. To be clear, LHDs have assumed responsibility for testing and vaccinating our residents for COVID-19 in addition to providing services like monitoring for other acute communicable diseases, opioid overdose prevention, food facility licensing, and dentistry for vulnerable populations, among many other items.

At present, LHDs overwhelmingly rely on state core funding to support essential public health services and public health infrastructure. As alluded to above, Baltimore City uses core funding to support several expansive service areas including communicable disease, environmental health, family planning, maternal and child health, wellness promotion, adult health and geriatric health, and administration and communication services.

By adjusting core funding, per capita spending on local public health will increase and LHD performance across core public health services will also improve as LHDs are able to reinvest in core services. This reinvestment includes the enforcement of laws and regulations, linkage of residents to needed health services, and investigation of health problems. More importantly, increased investment in public health infrastructure through increased core funding will also lead to an increased ability to respond to public health emergencies across the state including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

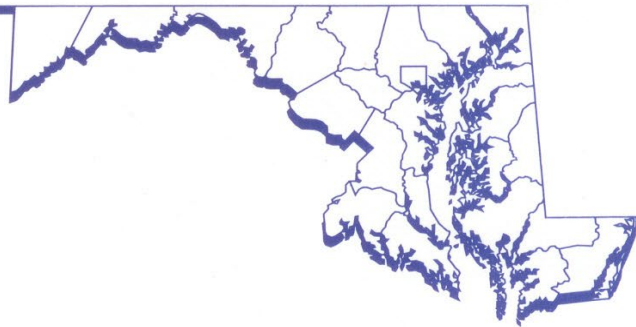
In 2019, BCA, alongside the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and numerous local health departments, vehemently supported Senate Bill 645 (“Local Health Services Funding – Modifications”), writing, “Restoring and reinvesting in core public health resources will increase LHDs’ capacity to respond to large scale outbreaks and emerging infectious diseases.” With SB 563, the General Assembly again has the opportunity to ensure better safeguards against future acute communicable disease outbreaks and also a better response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 563.

SB 563 - LHDs - Funding - SENATE BT - 2-17- MACHO

Uploaded by: Rossman, Maura

Position: FAV



SENATE BILL 563

Local Health Departments – Funding

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

Maura Rossman, MD, Health Officer, Howard County Health Department

For the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO)

Position: Support – February 17, 2021

The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports SB 563. MACHO is the professional association of the chief executives of the state's 24 local public health departments (LHDs).

In the 1995 legislative session, MACHO worked with legislators and state leadership to establish *Core Public Health Services Funding*. This included setting the minimal funding levels and established the formula for growth based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase and population growth. The amount of general funds was set at \$41 million.

Things took a turn in FY09 when Core Funding was cut by almost \$12 million. Fourteen years of inflationary adjustments were wiped out one stroke. In FY10 the Board of Public Works further reduced funding to \$37.3 million and the General Assembly froze the base funding at that level for FY10 and FY11 and did not provide the inflationary increase, though all other entities returned to pre-cut levels in FY13. During that time, interpretation of the inflationary adjustments changed from being compounded annually, as it had been calculated since the inception of the Core Funding formula, to arbitrary annual adjustments.

Although in recent years there have been some additions to Core Funding, the dollar amounts have never compensated for the drastic cuts a decade ago. As a result, LHDs were forced to cut vital staffing, including nurses who monitor and respond to infectious diseases, emergency preparedness personnel, environmental health specialists, and epidemiologists. These cuts have directly impacted the ability of LHDs to optimally respond to the myriad of demands brought on by COVID.

In addition, technology changes unanticipated in 1995 have increased operating costs beyond annual inflationary pressures. Core Funding has never been adjusted to account for hardware and software expenses or the IT personnel to manage multiple data systems. SB 563, for the first time, acknowledges data management costs for LHDs. In addition, the required evaluation of technology, communications and information services used by, provided to or shared or coordinated through local health departments, would provide invaluable information to illustrate current capacity of LHDs to fulfill their delegated, mandated and funded activities with existing IT-related infrastructure.

COVID has demonstrated the value LHDs provide to the residents and businesses of every jurisdiction. SB 563 takes an important step toward appropriate funding for these vital services. For these reasons MACHO strongly encourages support for this critical public health legislation. For more information please contact Ruth Maiorana, Executive Director, MACHO, at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-614-6891.

SB0563-BT_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Sanderson, Michael

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 563

Local Health Departments - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 17, 2021

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 563. This bill strengthens support for our state's front lines of public health and prevention efforts – the local health departments. The bill also clarifies pandemic-related uses of these funds, and requires a study of the information systems supporting these public health services. **This bill is a central initiative of the Maryland Association of Counties.**

The pandemic of 2020-21 has tested our public health infrastructure like nothing before – requiring medical and support staff to depend on resources from all available sources to respond. Maryland's leaders on the front lines have acted admirably in the face of this great challenge – but the support for them leading up to this crisis has not mirrored this important policy priority. SB 563 proposes three elements to steel our resolve to support this essential function, and be ready for whatever next challenge arises in public health.

First, SB 563 advances the core funds for local health departments modestly in each of the next two years. Local health departments receive targeted grant funds for many specific programs, but it is this core funding that “keeps the lights on” and supports central staff, equipment, technology, and the like. The funding levels proposed in the bill are far from a full restoration of reductions made in years before the pandemic, but still represent an admirable and appropriate step forward given the heightened understanding of public health.

Second, SB 563 adds to the areas where these core funds may be used. The new additions all relate to the realities of the pandemic – personal protective equipment, materials needed to combat communicable diseases, and information sharing. None of these functions are outside the general scope of a local health department, the language just eliminates any ambiguity about the intended use of State funds.

Finally, the bill requests a study by the end of 2021 of the information systems that support these needed functions, at both the State and local level. Data sharing and management is an important part of modern public health – and Health Officers are concerned that their support systems are lacking. The study should offer guidance on next steps for the Maryland Department of Health, to bring this important backdrop technology up to modern standards.

This bill provides local health departments with the funding and flexibility they need. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 563 to demonstrate a next phase of support for the public health infrastructure that our communities all rely upon.

SB 563_FrederickCoCE_Gardner_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Schaefer, Joy

Position: FAV



JAN H. GARDNER
Frederick County
Executive

SB 563

Local Health Departments
– Funding

County Position: SUPPORT

Date: February 17, 2021
Committee: Budget & Taxation

Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner urges your **SUPPORT** for Senate Bill – 563 – Local Health Departments – Funding.

Maryland’s Local Health Departments (LHDs) have mounted an exceptional response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. LHDs continue to provide front-line services – testing, contact tracing, and vaccinations – and play a significant role in education, guidance, and enforcement of State and local health requirements and directives. Adequate funding and flexibility is necessary to ensure the continued strength of our public health system and its ability to respond to immediate crises as well as fulfill essential functions.

County Executive Gardner supports the provisions in the proposed legislation that:

- Strengthens funding for Local Health Departments, acknowledging their vital role in the delivery of services and protection of public health in an increasingly complex landscape that requires response to a wide variety of issues and concerns;
- Specifies allowable uses for this funding to include expenses related to equipment necessary to respond to the pandemic, such as personal protective equipment, as well as expenses related to data management and information sharing;
- Requires an evaluation and assessment of the technology, communications, and information services used by Local Health Departments, which is essential to ensuring adequate modernization of our public health infrastructure; and
- Ensures the funding and flexibility that will enable local health departments to continue the fight against COVID-19 and, in the process, position Local Health Departments to meet future challenges.

Frederick County Executive Gardner urges a **FAVORABLE** report for Senate Bill 563.

Office of the County Executive • Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street • Frederick, Maryland 21701
301.600.1100 • jschaefer@frederickcountymd.gov

SB563_MDCEP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Schumitz, Kali

Position: FAV

Sufficient Public Health Funding Is Essential for Healthy, Equitable Maryland Communities

Position Statement in Support of Senate Bill 563

Given before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Local health departments play a vital role in protecting Maryland communities from infectious disease and providing access to basic health services. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the importance of an effective, sufficiently funded public health infrastructure. But state support for local health departments has plummeted during the last 30 years, weakening their ability to keep Marylanders healthy and likely making it harder for the state to respond to the pandemic. The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 563 because it would strengthen the basic standards that ensure local health departments have the resources they need to serve their communities.

The state has slashed support for county boards of health multiple times over the last 30 years and failed each time to fully rebuild.¹ This means that each round of cuts led to fewer staff and increasingly inadequate public health services – everything from reduced access to childhood vaccines to fewer water quality tests. Some county leaders have said the reduced health department staffing due to years of inadequate funding made it harder to perform administrative tasks associated with the pandemic response.

- The state responded to a fiscal crisis in the early 1990s by cutting state funding for county health departments from \$47.8 million in fiscal year 1990 to only \$14.6 million in 1993, a 69 percent decline. The state slowly rebuilt public health aid in the subsequent years, but by 2003 funding was still a quarter below its 1990 level.
- Public health aid remained essentially steady during the early-2000s economic expansion, but policymakers targeted county health departments for cuts again during the Great Recession. The state reduced public health aid by \$10 million in fiscal year 2009 and by another \$20 million in 2010 – a 44 percent cut over two years.
- These funding cuts translated into lower staffing, reduced services, and less efficient operations. All 24 county health departments cut staffing between 2009 and 2011, eliminating 449 or more employee and contractual positions altogether. These included 44 positions in communicable disease control and 110 positions in maternal and child health.
- Health departments ultimately had to terminate some services altogether. The Frederick and Montgomery County health departments stopped providing vaccinations at public schools. The Howard County health department closed its HIV clinic. The department in Cecil County ceased water sampling. The cuts forced some departments to charge higher fees and made it harder to adopt up-to-date electronic health records systems.

An effective public health system is especially important to heal the wounds inflicted by centuries of racist policies that have put Black and Brown Marylanders in greater danger of facing serious health problems.

As of February 12, 2021, more than 317,000 Marylanders have contracted COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, and at least 7,282 have died of the virus:ⁱⁱ

- About 9.3 percent of Latinx Marylanders have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to 5.8 percent of Black Marylanders and 4.2 percent of white Marylanders. Only 2.1 percent of Asian Marylanders have contracted the virus.
- Black Marylanders have died of COVID-19 at a rate 25 percent higher than Marylanders who are not Black.

Health barriers were heavily racialized even before the pandemic:ⁱⁱⁱ

- Both Black parents and Black children are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to die during or soon after childbirth. Both Black and Latinx parents are less likely to receive adequate prenatal health care than their white counterparts, and
- Between 2012 and 2014, Black children in Maryland were twice as likely as white children to have asthma.
- In 2016, children in Baltimore City were five times as likely as those in other counties to have lead poisoning, with the highest rates among those living in rental housing built before 1950. Black households are more than twice as likely to live in this housing type as white households.

Protecting Maryland communities from COVID-19 and ensuring every Marylander is able to live a healthy life will require a comprehensive policy approach. Strengthening funding for local health departments is one important step in the right direction.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee make a favorable report on Senate Bill 563.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 563

Bill summary

Senate Bill 563 would require increased state funding for local health departments beginning in fiscal year 2023 and would expand allowable uses of this funding to include purchase of personal protective equipment for health professionals, data enhancements, and other activities related to communicable disease control.

Background

State policymakers have made multiple rounds of deep cuts to core public health funding during the last 30 years, with a pattern of sharp decreases during fiscal crises followed by inadequate increases in subsequent years. In FY 2019, core state funding for local health departments was less than half its level in FY 1990, adjusted for inflation and population growth.^{iv}

Equity Implications

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Impact

Senate Bill 563 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ Christopher Meyer, “Lessons from the Great Recession: Policymakers Must Reject Deep Budget Cuts for a Strong Recovery,” Maryland Center on Economic Policy, 2020, <http://www.mdeconomy.org/recession-budget-cuts/>

ⁱⁱ MDCEP analysis of Maryland Department of Health COVID-19 data and U.S. Census Bureau 2019 Population Estimates.

ⁱⁱⁱ Christopher Meyer, “Budgeting for Opportunity: How our Fiscal Policy Choices Can Remove Barriers Facing Marylanders of Color and Advance Shared Prosperity,” Maryland Center on Economic Policy, 2018, http://www.mdeconomy.org/budgeting-for-opportunity-health-education-transportation/#_edn13

^{iv} Meyer, 2020.

^v MDCEP analysis of Maryland Department of Health COVID-19 data and U.S. Census Bureau 2019 Population Estimates.

^{vi} Christopher Meyer, “Budgeting for Opportunity: How our Fiscal Policy Choices Can Remove Barriers Facing Marylanders of Color and Advance Shared Prosperity,” Maryland Center on Economic Policy, 2018, http://www.mdeconomy.org/budgeting-for-opportunity-health-education-transportation/#_edn13

SB 563.pdf

Uploaded by: Sharfstein, Joshua

Position: FWA

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|---------------|---|
| Testimony on: | SB 563 |
| Before: | The Committee on Budget and Taxation |
| Submitted by: | Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Professor of the Practice of Health Policy and Management Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Joshua.Sharfstein@jhu.edu |
| Position: | Support with amendments |
| Date: | February 15, 2021 |
| Disclaimer: | <i>This testimony represents the views of the author, not necessarily the position of Johns Hopkins University.</i> |

Local health departments in Maryland are critically important to the well-being, health, and safety of the state's millions of residents. These agencies are responsible for a wide range of functions, including infectious disease control, food safety, and environmental health. They do everything from signing up Marylanders for health insurance to implementing innovative programs to tackle infant and maternal mortality. Health departments are especially attuned to inequity, along with opportunities to improve the health of communities of color and rural populations.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed around the nation, the failure to invest in local health infrastructure puts us all at risk. Critical tasks include maintaining a robust workforce, modernizing IT systems to share and analyze data effectively, and creating the capacity to mobilize to address public health emergencies.

SB 563 would increase funding for local public health departments, as well as set in motion a process for a long-overdue assessment of IT systems and data capacity across the state. This is important legislation that will support the health of Maryland families for years to come.

One specific suggestion for an amendment: Delete provision (8) on page 5 related to "providing protective equipment for ... health care personnel in contact with patients" as not well suited for this legislation. The general cost of personal protective equipment for healthcare workers in Maryland far exceeds the funding in the bill and is best left for the healthcare system itself. The opportunity to spend a portion of these funds for emergency preparedness is provided for in provision (9).

SB 563 Local Health Depts-Funding (Griffith) B&T 2

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Barbara

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 563 Local Health Departments – Funding (Griffith)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: February 17, 2021

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 563 mandates a funding increase for the local departments of health to \$70 million in FY 2023 and \$80 million in FY 2024; prevents funding levels from declining below \$80 million in FY 2025 and in subsequent years; and specifies additional categories of spending related to communicable diseases.

EXPLANATION: The FY 2022 Budget allowance for local health departments is \$61.8 million for formula funding and an additional block grant in the amount of \$4 million. The Budget, as introduced, includes \$65.8 million in total funds for local health departments -- a 7.2% increase over FY 2021.

The Department of Health has spearheaded the coordination and funding of COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and vaccinations throughout the pandemic. Local jurisdictions have received significant funding amounts for these purposes during the Summer and Fall of 2020. Those jurisdictions with populations in excess of 500,000 received federal funding directly.

More specifically, the Governor announced on February 4, 2021 more than \$123.2 million in funding to support the local health departments, including resources for ongoing COVID-19 vaccination activities. A \$9 million supplemental budget request will support 21 county health departments for deficits related to closing their self-supported fee-for-service clinics and \$114 million to be awarded (on a reimburseable basis) to local health depts for vaccination activities.

Local health departments are also slated to receive an additional \$5.4 million in COVID-19 Crisis Cooperative Agreement funding (from the December 2020 congressional action). Further, the Biden stimulus package includes \$1.9 billion for Maryland local governments.

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