



**Testimony SB 172**  
**Budget & Taxation Committee**  
**January 25, 2021**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Guzzone & Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

SB 172 creates Health Equity Resource Communities which would provide additional health care resources to communities with poor health outcomes in Maryland in order to reduce inequities by race, ethnicity, disability, and location. This initiative would be funded by a one penny per dollar increase in the state's alcohol beverage sales tax.

COVID-19 has raised the importance of sufficient public health funding; the role of our physical and social surroundings in determining our health; how policies, systems and environments contribute to health inequities; and how interconnected we all are – as individuals, communities, organizations and sectors – when it comes to health and well-being. Our health as individuals and communities is deeply intertwined. Just as important to acknowledge is that health itself is intertwined with affordable and quality housing, good schools, safe neighborhoods, sufficient family support such as child care, economic opportunity and the list goes on, and on and on.

To ensure that all Marylanders have access to opportunity, advances are needed not only in health care but also in fields such as education, childcare, housing, community planning, transportation, and business development. Health Equity Resource Communities are a tested strategy to close health disparities and begin making progress toward greater access to social and economic opportunities. Making these advances involves working together to address social determinants of health. The community development sector is poised to work in collaboration with the legislature and partners across the state to improve the lives of all people.

We urge your favorable report.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network