

TO: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
Assistant Director, State Affairs, Johns Hopkins University and Medicine

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Johns Hopkins would like to offer testimony to support the amended version of **Senate Bill 741 COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccination Act of 2021**. This bill implements wide spread requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Johns Hopkins supports the intent of this bill and sees value in many of the provisions and the amended version resolves the concerns regarding implementing requirements on Home Health agencies.

Johns Hopkins Home Care Group (JHHCG) is the entity of Johns Hopkins Medicine that delivers home health services in addition to other essential home-based services like home infusion, respiratory care, and private duty care. JHHCG delivers care across Maryland and typically has an average census of roughly 800 patients on any given day. JHHCG currently complies with all relevant federal, state and local health department guidelines to keep the staff and patients safe. These guidelines include basic infection protection protocols required to become a licensed home health provider, enhanced infection protection protocols from CMS (see March 2020 Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention Concerning Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Home Health Agencies (HHAs); reference identification: QSO – 20-18-HHA), all Johns Hopkins Health System COVID-19 prevention policies. All home health agency staff members are screened every day and patients are screened before staff arrive. Appropriate PPE is provided to all staff and patients.

The legislation as amended requires home health agencies to adopt and implement a COVID-19 infection control and prevention plan for all patients and staff. This is a reasonable requirement to ensure the continued safety of all Marylanders providing and receiving home health care.

Johns Hopkins applauds the sponsors' intent to create accountability and prevent the spread of COVID-19. In our review, there is no evidence to date that home health agencies are a primary spreader of the virus and in fact home health agencies have been shown to prevent the spread by keeping the most vulnerable patients in their homes safely. Johns Hopkins is thankful for the collaboration with the Senate to develop a workable solution for both providers and Marylanders during COVID-19 pandemic. We urge the committee to **support as amended Senate Bill 741 COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccination Act of 2021**.