



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1148 – Secretary of Health – School-Based Health Centers – Guidelines and Administration of Grants

Hearing Date: March 2, 2020

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) strongly supports *House Bill 1148 – Secretary of Health – School-Based Health Centers – Guidelines and Administration of Grants*. The bill transfers the State’s school-based health center (SBHC) program from the Maryland State Department of Education to the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health under the Maryland Department of Health.

SBHCs are community health centers for students who live in areas with a high concentration of poverty. They are located within a school in order to be accessible to students, so that parents do not have to navigate transportation and work schedules to ensure their children can obtain basic primary care and behavioral health care services. Some SBHCs also offer dental services.

SBHCs must be part of a larger health care organization, such as federally qualified health systems including Choptank Community Health System and Baltimore Medical System. However, the State’s policies for SBHCs are often not aligned with the State’s broader public health policies. This is because SBHCs are governed by the Maryland State Department of Education, while other health care providers fall under the oversight of the Maryland Department of Health. This legislation seeks to correct that misalignment by placing the administration of the SBHC program under the Maryland Department of Health. This transfer will allow the State to integrate SBHCs into broader public health initiatives to improve health outcomes for children.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

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