

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 463 - MARYLAND HEALTH EQUITY RESOURCE ACT**

**House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 2, 2021**



Health Care for the Homeless supports HB 463, which would establish a process in which MDH approves “Health Equity Resource Communities” designed to funnel state resources to specific communities to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes in those areas.

Health Care for the Homeless is deeply committed to deliberately addressing health inequities. While homelessness was pervasive before COVID-19, the pandemic exacerbated already the already existing inequities that lead to and perpetuate homelessness. Health Equity Resource Communities would be underserved communities around the state that compete for grants and other financial incentives to address poor health outcomes that contribute to inequities by race, ethnicity, disability, and geographic location.

Based on the 2012-2016 pilot that increased access to health care, reduced hospital admissions and created cost savings, this bill is a critical step to addressing inequities in our health care system. We urge a favorable report.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We work to prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families by providing quality, integrated health care and promoting access to affordable housing and sustainable incomes through direct service, advocacy, and community engagement. We deliver integrated medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City, and in Harford, and Baltimore Counties. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.