



HOUSE HEALTH & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

February 23, 2021

TESTIMONY

Submitted by
Dr. Bernard Sadusky, Executive Director

HB 836 – Covid-19 Testing, Contact Tracing and Vaccination Act of 2021

Position: Favorable with Amendments

On behalf of Maryland's 16 community colleges, I want to thank the sponsor for introducing HB 836 that requires the State Health Departments, local health departments, and institutions of higher education to develop plans to control, track and vaccinate our citizens.

Community college students are citizens of the jurisdictions in which they attend college and commute to campus daily. We have no healthcare centers, nor do we have trained personnel to administer COVID tests to students. Our students rely on their local health departments and are largely served by local area clinics. Community colleges have no ability to administer COVID tests.

Throughout the pandemic community colleges have followed the protocols of the state and local health departments. We have instituted policies and procedures on our campuses to keep faculty and students as safe as possible from the spread of the COVID virus. Within two and a half weeks of the COVID announcement community college had converted all course instruction to on-line delivery. Currently, only those students requiring clinical work and laboratory instruction are offered face-to-face instruction. These classes are offered in small settings with social distancing, masks and shields.

Our institutions will remain vigilant; however, our students commute daily, and in many cases, students will come and leave multiple times during a day. Because of the incubation period of the Covid virus, a requirement which mandates a negative Covid test prior to entering our commuter campuses may not provide the protection intended.

We ask that the Committee amend this legislation to exempt community colleges from this legislation and allow us to continue to work with local area health departments to facilitate testing and vaccination of our students.