



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 31, 2022

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 1082 – Public Health – Consumer Health Information – Hub and Requirements

Dear Chair Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 1082. Health literacy is critical to our mission of a healthy Maryland. The ability of consumers to successfully understand and navigate their health care options is vital to meet the population health goals of the Total Cost of Care Model. Maryland hospitals thoroughly review patient materials so they can be understood across education levels and populations. However, we appreciate the ability to leverage the expertise contemplated by HB 1082 to further our accessibility efforts as needed.

The impact of low health literacy has been well documented. More than 80 million adults in the United States have low health literacy, which can adversely affect the quality of their health care. Limited health literacy is associated with increased hospitalizations, greater use of emergency care, and lower adherence to health improving regimens—all leading to poorer overall health and higher mortality rates.

We appreciate the bill's holistic view on different aspects of health literacy, including alignment of state and local government requirements. Mandatory patient notices and disclosures have increased considerably over the years, often with compulsory model language and provisions that can potentially compound the challenges generated by low health literacy. We believe the benefits of the Consumer Health Information Hub, proposed under HB 1082, will be magnified if it explores how to streamline patient-centered communications across state and federal requirements to improve understanding of patient rights and responsibilities.

Health literacy is essential for empowering patients to take control and manage their own health, thus contributing to the continued success of Maryland's Model. We thank the sponsor for introducing this important legislation to help Marylanders make informed health care decisions.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on HB 1082.

For more information, please contact:
Brian Sims, Director, Quality & Health Improvement
Bsims@mhaonline.org