



BILL NO: HB 1082

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

POSITION: Support as amended

TITLE: Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements

BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1082 - Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements (“HB1082”) would designate the University of Maryland’s Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy as the State’s Consumer Health Information Hub. HB 1082 also requires State and local agencies to use plain language in public communications about health, safety, and social services benefits. The bill establishes grant requirements related to health literacy and supports development of staff training and standardized protocols for evaluating the appropriateness of health literacy initiatives. The bill provides that the provisions of this Act are not subject to judicial review and do not create a judicial or administrative right of action. The bill also requires the appropriation of \$350,000 each fiscal year beginning in 2024 to the State’s Consumer Health Information Hub. The Consumer Health Information Hub shall become effective July 2022 and shall remain effective until June 30, 2026.

POSITION AND RATIONALE

The Maryland Health Care Commission supports HB 1082 as amended.

The mission of the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) includes promoting informed health care decision making by collecting and publicly reporting meaningful information on the availability, quality, and cost of services to Maryland consumers, providers, and other stakeholders. Our statute mandates public reporting on the quality and performance of Maryland health care providers including nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities, home health, hospice, ambulatory surgery facilities and health plans.

Maryland government is committed to engaging Maryland residents in their own health care. Over the past two years, the challenges of earning and holding consumers attention has proven daunting. Regardless of whether one is promoting vaccination, educating on the Total Cost of Care Model, or informing patients on the quality and cost of different providers new ideas are always welcome. State agencies use plain language standards, seek guidance with consumer advocates and obtain input from consumer focus groups to guide our work

throughout the years. Given the array of health care sources, some credible others not, getting the right information at the right time to the right resident is an enormous challenge. Our *Healthcare Quality Reports* consumer website¹ is the vehicle through which we present our quality and performance data to the public. We know firsthand the importance of rapidly evolving information presentations to reflect the latest approaches and engaging trusted community members in promoting our work.

The MHCC supports the concept of a Consumer Health Information Hub to guide and coordinate the health literacy standards and requirements across State and local government agencies and to serve as a resource for health literacy initiatives. The Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy within the University of Maryland School of Public Health appears to have the expertise and infrastructure to serve in that capacity.

For these reasons, the Commission asks for a favorable report on HB 1082 as amended.

Note: The Maryland Health Care Commission is an independent State agency, and the position of the Commission may differ from the position of the Maryland Department of Health.

¹ (<https://healthcarequality.mhcc.maryland.gov/>)

