



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

House Bill 1082: Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements

March 31, 2022

*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 1082. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our skilled nursing members provide the majority of long-term and post-acute care to Marylanders in need.

House Bill 1082 designates the University of Maryland Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy as the State's Consumer Health Information Hub, requires State and local agencies to use plain language in public communications about health, safety, and social services benefits, and establishes grant and procurement requirements related to health literacy.

As we have all seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that Marylanders have access to clear, accurate, and evidence-based information and services to make informed healthcare decisions. Given the wide range of diverse residents throughout the State, it is important that health information is provided in a way that is linguistically and culturally appropriate. Not only is this beneficial for individual and family health, but it can help combat issues of health disparities by creating more equitable access to healthcare information.

There are many agencies and organizations throughout the State that provide credible, accurate, and consistent health information. It is important that Marylanders be able to access this information with confidence. Understanding health plans, discharge instructions, prescriptions, and social services can be difficult for people of all backgrounds and education levels.

Together, we should ensure that all Marylanders have access to critical healthcare information by supporting State and local agencies and organizations that communicate with the public during times of crisis and about high-priority issue areas such as opioid abuse prevention and diabetes prevention.

Given Maryland's Total Cost of Care contract and our population health initiatives, it is universally beneficial for all stakeholders that consumers are well-informed with accessible, consistent, and evidence-based healthcare information.

**For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee on House Bill 1082.**

*Submitted by:*

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