

SUPPORT

SB0548/HB0609 Local Health Officers - Removal - Grounds and Process

February 23, 2022

February 24, 2022

Good afternoon, Madame Chair and Committee members. My name is Chelsea Tarleton I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have practiced in Maryland for 6 years. I support this bill SB0548/HB0609 Local Health Officers - Removal - Grounds and Process.

Early in my social work career I was fortunate enough to be an employee of the Behavioral Health sector of the Calvert County Health Department. The Health Department team was composed of medical doctors, nurse Practitioners, nurses, therapists of various backgrounds as well supportive various administrative personnel to address community health needs as well as provide mental health services to an underserved population.

Through my growth in the role of a therapist I learned that this cohesive work relationship was imperative to community wellness as a whole. I spent the majority of my years with the Health Department within the school setting as a school therapist. The health Department worked with the county school system in implementing therapeutic resources throughout the school day for students to utilize. The school based therapy program provided therapy to students within the walls of the school itself eliminating barriers that we as health care providers meet on a daily basis, such as transportation and time management to

mention a couple for example. I was highly supportive by the school staff and personnel of the Board of Educators. The level of support that I received was directly attributed to the working relationship our Health Officer established long before my entrance into the field. During my times as a school therapist I was a part of the school team providing therapy but also connecting families with services, assistance, meeting the needs including housing, food assistance, extended health care at home and so on...

I recall several situations in which I was a main voice of several team meetings implementing appropriate IEP's and learning programs. I was there to help de-escalate. I was there to help lessen anxiety with school shooting threats. I was there to help students with a family member passing and assassinating back to school. I was there to help make sure bullying was addressed.

The list of the actions I was fortunate to be a part of is innumerable.

The school system is one example of the community relationship our Health Officer established within the Calver County community and led by example to implement resources state wide. The expansion of services coordinated by the Health Officer during the time of my employment is numerous. Some other outreach programs include protecting the youth at a much younger age and even in utero. To briefly mention a program is the options to the substance use population. The Health Department offers a special resource to women who are pregnant and actively using opioids. Through medication management the women are able to wean off the dangerous opioid and implement certain medication regimens to protect the baby as well as themselves from withdrawal which can be lethal to a fetus. The women are apart of a strong therapeutic group and maintain treatment postpartum.

I have been witness to so many success and parents that have remained opioid free to this day.

I would not have been able to witness any of this success of clients early in my career without the integrity diligence and care that our Health Officer implemented for the community.

Later now in my career I have re-located to Anne Arundel County and moved jobs closer in proximity to home

As we grow and change positions, jobs, places, careers etc.. I acknowledge that I was so fortunate to be apart of an organization in which our health officer was so supportive and involved with the community. This testament is one example of how one person who cares about a community can change the trajectory of a young life.

I am writing to you in effort to convey the effeteness of a proper Health Officer. I hope these words find you well and you can think about the services mentioned above and how these populations need these services now more than ever.

Thank you so much for your time in considering my testimony,

Thank you for all the hard work you do to make Maryland a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Tarleton, LCSW-C

449 Colonial Ridge Lane,

Arnold Maryland

Chelseatarleton01@gmail.com