



**2022 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 1082 - Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements

COMMITTEE: Senate - Finance Committee

POSITION: Letter of Support

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 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 requirements related to health literacy.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports HB 1082. This legislation will codify Maryland's support for advancing health literacy across the state. Health literacy is an essential component of public health and the medical care of individuals. Ensuring access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health information is a key component to reducing health disparities, optimizing lower-cost primary care services, and improving the overall health and wellbeing of our communities.¹ **The modest budgetary cost of this bill will almost certainly bring a substantial return on investment in the form of Medicaid savings.**

HB 1082 establishes the University of Maryland Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy as the State's Consumer Health Information Hub. The Hub will promote access to accurate, evidence-based, health, social service, and safety information. The Hub will provide critical technical assistance, trainings, and resources to state and local government agencies in addition to health systems, community-based organizations, and other applicable entities to improve and support health literacy across Maryland.

Many local health departments currently use the Herschel S. Horowitz Center for technical assistance and training on Health Literacy. We have found great value in the center's skills, knowledge, and comprehensive resources. LHDs believe that further efforts geared towards achieving health literacy at the local level are necessary to improve equity. As more healthcare information and services transition to web-based formats, both private and public organizations will benefit from expert guidance that the new Health Information Hub can provide.

In sum, high-risk families, physicians and nurses, hospitals, and public health agencies will all benefit from HB 1082's bolstering of the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support for HB 1082. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

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¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2021). Health Literacy in Healthy People 2030.
<https://health.gov/our-work/national-health-initiatives/healthy-people/healthy-people-2030/health-literacy-healthy-people-2030>