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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**Support SB 708:
Maryland Department of Health - Office of the Inspector General
and Emergency Procurement Audits**

Background:

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of Maryland has had to work quickly to secure critical medical equipment and life-saving contractual services.
- To secure these essential contracts, the state awarded many large emergency procurement contracts to third-party entities, some of whom did not have the appropriate experience in providing the services they were contracted for.
- A concerning number of entities contracted by the state during the pandemic struggled to follow Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines relating to the delivery and storage of COVID-19 vaccines.
- TrueCare24, one of these third-party contractors, improperly managed vaccines and delivered hundreds of potentially compromised doses to Marylanders.¹²
- Despite the existence of an internal Office of Inspector General (OIG) within MDH, the OIG declined to investigate the allegations of vaccine misuse at the time.

Why SB 708 is Needed:

- Third-party contractors that do not follow CDC and MDH guidance relating to the handling and delivery of vaccines put Maryland's public health in jeopardy.
- Without proper oversight of the emergency procurement contracts, there is a higher risk for the misuse, mismanagement, and misallocation of taxpayer funds to third-party contractors.

¹ [Baltimore Sun \(December, 2021\)](#)

² [Baltimore Sun \(February, 2022\)](#)

- The current statute can be strengthened to ensure that the OIG within MDH has the explicit authority to investigate operations that threaten public safety and to ensure that instances related to incompetence, malfeasance, and negligence can be addressed by an entity within this unit.

What SB 708 Does:

- SB 708 establishes the position of a “Compliance Officer” within the Office of the Inspector General in MDH with designated education and experience requirements for the position.
- SB 708 allows the “Compliance Officer” to be designated by the Inspector General for Health.
- SB 708 directs the Inspector General or a designated Assistant Inspector General to investigate any fraud, waste, abuse, and behavior within MDH that threatens public safety or otherwise is indicative of negligence, incompetence, or malfeasance.
- SB 708 clarifies that the Inspector General and the designated Assistant Inspector General have the necessary authority to execute investigations within MDH operations to scrutinize concerns that do not solely relate to the misuse of Department funds.
- SB 708 requires that the Inspector General, Compliance Officer, or a designated Assistant Inspector General respond to complaints about the MDH relating to fraud, waste, abuse, and behavior that threatens public safety within 7 business days of the date the complaint was received.

What SB 708 Accomplishes:

- SB 708 protects the health and safety of Marylanders by creating the position of “Compliance Officer” to ensure that the MDH and the units it contracts with are following best practices in health and investigating negligence, incompetence, and malfeasance within the department.
- SB 708 ensures that there is a dedicated oversight entity that can investigate practices that are detrimental to public health.