



House Bill 286

Emergency Medical Services – Paramedics – Immunization Administration – Effective Date

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: February 8, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally and D’Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 286, as it would extend a critical initiative for local health departments to carry out targeted public health initiatives by authorizing paramedics to administer specified vaccines with proper training and oversight.

Local health departments play a vital role in providing immunization services, counseling, and controlling cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, through collaborative efforts with state and local medical professionals, county governments, and other stakeholders, local health departments ensure effective immunization practices, disease surveillance and reporting, education and outreach, and program oversight.

HB 286 would extend by three years the sunset on Chapter 799 of 2021, which authorized paramedics to administer vaccines on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommended adult immunization schedule if the services are part of a public safety or commercial emergency medical services (EMS) occupational health program or a population health outreach effort conducted by local health departments, hospitals, or health systems in the state.

Under the law that HB 286 seeks to extend, vaccinations must be (1) provided under the direction of the EMS operational program, ambulance service medical director, or other qualified physician and authorized by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), and (2) provided in accordance with a written agreement between the paramedic’s EMS operational program or commercial EMS service and the appropriate local health department, hospital, or health system.

MACo advocates that public health and emergency agencies be properly supported with necessary funds to support staff, services, supplies, and technology – not only in these times of crisis – but for the everyday preventative and responsive health services they provide.

HB 286 would advance local efforts to improve vaccination rates, providing one of the most successful and cost-effective services to prevent disease and death. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 286 a **FAVORABLE** report.