

Date: March 21, 2023

Bill number: SB0052

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill title: **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support as amended for Senate Bill 52 (SB 52).

Senate Bill 52 would require DHS to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products should such a waiver be made available by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

DHS estimates that more than 45,000 Maryland SNAP recipients would be eligible to make use of such an expansion of the usage of their SNAP benefits. This expansion would widen the benefits support to include essential items for eligible infants and women.

The Department would like to note for the Committee that at this time such use of SNAP funds is not permitted under 7 C.F.R § 271.2 (2023). SNAP benefits are explicitly for the purpose of nutrition. Should changes to federal law be made and a waiver or other regulations surrounding the usage of SNAP funds make clear to DHS that Maryland recipients of SNAP could purchase diapers and/or menstrual hygiene products with their SNAP benefits, the Department would apply for the waiver and adopt any necessary state regulations for implementation.

The Department is grateful to offer our support for SB 52 and requests a favorable as amended report.