



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 628 – School-Based Health Centers - Services, Infrastructure, and Funding

Hearing Date: February 28, 2023

Position: Favorable with Amendment

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) supports *Senate Bill 628 – School-Based Health Center – Services, Infrastructure, and Funding* with amendments. The bill furthers the integration of school-based health centers into the health care system.

School-based health centers are community health centers within the four walls of school. Services may include primary, behavioral, and oral health care services. There are almost 90 school-based health centers across Maryland. Located in areas of high concentration of poverty, school-based health centers primarily serve children who are uninsured or participate in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

MASBHC strongly supports three of the featured provisions in the bill:

- **Support for participation in the federal Vaccines for Children Program.** School-based health centers face barriers in entering into the Vaccines for Children Program, including not having the refrigeration units necessary for storage of COVID 19 vaccine. If these barriers were addressed, the Maryland Department of Health and school-based health centers could partner in increasing outreach about vaccinations to families with children enrolled in school-based health centers. This issue was addressed in the 2022 Annual Report of the Council for the Advancement of School-Based Health Centersⁱ. MASBHC supports increasing the support and coordination for school-based health centers to participate in the Vaccines for Children Program;
- **Sufficient funds to support school-based health centers in every county.** Out of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, 14 have school-based health centers.ⁱⁱ MASBHC supports ensuring there is sufficient funding to support every jurisdiction that requests support and meets the criteria of the Department for funding; and



- **Reimbursement for sports physicals.** School-based health centers provide examinations needed for students to participate in school sports. This service helps ensure all students, regardless of family income level or insurance status, can participate in sports. If federal rules allow this service to be reimbursable, then MASBHC supports broadening Medicaid coverage to include this service.

Amendment Requests

MASBHC would like to request the following amendments to address implementation issues:

- **Remove Required Formula for school-based health center grants.** MASBHC agrees that there should be a consistent methodology in determining funding for school-based health centers. However, we would like the Department of Health to be able to retain some discretion in awarding funding. This will allow the Department to allocate funding according to the emerging needs and requests of the school-based health center community. Therefore, MASBHC would request that the bill's provision requiring funding to be distributed according to a formula be removed:

On page 3, strike lines 8 down through page 4, line 1 in its entirety.

- **Clarify that MDH should prepare an assessment of the resources needed to add at least one school-based health center in each jurisdiction:**

On page 4 strike lines 2 though 5 and replace with:

"SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED THAT the Maryland Department of Health shall assess the additional resources needed to support the establishment of at least one school-based health center in every jurisdiction."

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. We ask for a favorable report with the amendments we have highlighted. If you need any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

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<https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Documents/CASBHC%20Annual%20Report%202021%201.13.21%20to%20print.pdf>

ii Ibid