



## Maryland Community Health System

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 291 - Commission on Public Health - Establishment

**Hearing Date:** February 15, 2023

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Community Health System supports *Senate Bill 291 – Commission on Public Health - Establishment*. The bill establishes the Commission on Public Health to study and make recommendations to address the infrastructure needs of the Maryland Department of Health and local health departments.

As a network of federally qualified health centers, we collaborate closely with the State and local health departments. These public health agencies have historically been under-resourced. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented strain on the public health system, revealing the gaps in our public health workforce, information technology, and communications systems.

We strongly support this bill as it will advance the mission of MDH and local health departments to safeguard public health and improve health outcomes in all of our communities. There is a seat for a representative of a safety net provider. We strongly recommend that the safety net provider be an FQHC, as we are the safety net providers that ensure our communities have access to the full continuum of care including somatic, behavioral and oral health. Our health centers stayed open for both in-person and telehealth services throughout the pandemic.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.