



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

---

**ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550**

**ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270**

---

**SB 281**

**DATE: February 15, 2023**

**SPONSOR: Senator Lam, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Finance**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT (Department of Health and Human Services)**

---

### **Commission on Public Health – Establishment**

Along with frontline health care workers, county health departments were at the forefront of public health delivery during the pandemic and have on-the-ground insights into many of the areas that will be studied by the Commission on Public Health established by Senate Bill 281. These insights include lessons learned from COVID and strengthening the public health infrastructure to better anticipate, respond, and protect Marylanders from future pandemics. This bill will also allow for the opportunity to study best practices and recommend changes that will improve the general health of all Marylanders and reduce the health disparities that plague us.

Because of the importance of addressing health equity in the recommendations made by the Commission, this expertise must exist in more than just one member of the commission. Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) recommends that experience in health equity be a criterion through which all persons are evaluated for membership on the Commission. Montgomery County is proud of our combined health and human services approach to public health services delivery and believe that this unique organizational structure enables us to meet the holistic public health needs of our residents. We ask that the Commission recognize that counties have different needs and capabilities, and a variety of models may be effective across the state. To that end it will be important to have representation on the Committee from a variety of health departments across the State.

To be most impactful, the Commission should act quickly to capitalize on the lessons learned from COVID and work to a stronger, healthier Maryland. MCDHHS encourages a faster timeline for the report required by the bill, in order to more quickly implement the needed support for public health infrastructure that will be recommended by the Commission.

MCHDDS supports Sente Bill 281 and its endeavor to take a clear-eyed look at the essential work of our state and local health departments and ask the committee to issue a favorable report with the amendments suggested above.