



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 299 (3<sup>rd</sup>) – Grocery Stores and Restaurants - Automated External Defibrillator Program (Joe Sheya Act) – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 299 (3<sup>rd</sup>) – Grocery Stores and Restaurants - Automated External Defibrillator Program (Joe Sheya Act). This bill requires the owner and operator of qualifying grocery stores and restaurants to develop and, beginning January 1, 2025, implement an automated external defibrillator (AED) program. This bill will require MDH and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems to jointly adopt regulations that: (1) establish guidelines for inspections and annual maintenance of AEDs, and (2) assist the owners and operators of grocery stores and restaurants subject to this requirement in implementing AED programs in their facilities.

MDH considers a reduction in mortality from heart disease a top priority. Additionally, the State Health Improvement Process identified a reduction in age-adjusted mortality rate as one of its objectives. AEDs play a vital role in the continuum of health care efforts to reduce mortality due to heart disease. An increasing number of businesses and facilities have established AED programs. To note, MDH does not have data on: (1) how many people experience cardiac events in grocery stores and restaurants, (2) how many grocery stores and restaurants meet the size criteria established in this bill, or (3) how many of these facilities may already have an AED program in place.

MDH has previous experience in implementing legislation similar to SB 299 for swimming pools, and is able to absorb any operational impact resulting from the development and implementation of regulations for food service facilities. The responsibility for inspection of food service facilities will continue to rest with local health departments.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary