



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

March 9, 2023

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

RE: HB 977– Maryland Department of Health - Office of the Chief Medical Examiner - Letter of Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 977 - Maryland Department of Health - Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. This bill will establish the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in the Maryland Department of Health, rename the State Postmortem Examiners Commission (PMEC) to be the Postmortem Examiners Advisory Committee, require and authorize MDH and the Office to perform certain duties and powers previously performed by the Commission, and authorize MDH to contract with a physician for employment with the Office on a per diem basis.

The bill's establishment of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) within MDH will make it clear that MDH is responsible and accountable for the administrative functions and operations of the OCME. Currently, the PMEC is charged with employing the staff and ensuring that the OCME has appropriate equipment; however, the budgetary, fiscal, human resources, and procurement functions are integrated into the work of those respective program offices within MDH. The change proposed by the bill will streamline the processes and also provide greater oversight responsibility and accountability for the operation of the OCME. MDH commits to maintaining close collaboration with the Postmortem Examiners Advisory Committee to provide support for OCME operations.

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

Sincerely,

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