



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 26, 2023

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 214 - Commission on Public Health - Establishment

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 214. Since March 2020, the need for a robust public health infrastructure has become clear. Nationwide investment in and attention to our public health institutions have been chronically underfunded or ignored for decades.

Maryland has taken several steps to bolster the public health system. The General Assembly passed HB 1123 during the 2021 legislative session, supported by MHA, which increased funding for local health departments. Further, the Health Services Cost Review Commission and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation established the Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy (SIHIS) as part of Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care Model. SIHIS includes three population health goals for diabetes, opioid use disorder, and maternal and child health.

The link between clinical outcomes and public health has been established, and the state has recognized these linkages; however, there is still work to be done. The Commission established under HB 214 will recommend building on the foundation of Maryland's public health infrastructure, including workforce needs, to ensure the state can improve population health into the future.

A 2022 GlobalData report requested by MHA, estimates a statewide shortage of 5,000 full-time registered nurses and 4,000 licensed practical nurses in a variety of care settings. Without intervention, shortages could double or even triple by 2035. The Commission should consider a similar approach to estimating public health workforce needs.

The hospital field looks forward to being a part of this conversation during the legislative session and as the Commission begins work.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on HB 214.

For more information, please contact:
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