



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 214**

**Commission on Public Health – Establishment**

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Stephanie Klapper, Deputy Director, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

January 26, 2023

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly and Members of the House HGO Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill. We especially thank Vice-Chair Kelly for being the lead sponsor for the bill. We are pleased to support House Bill 214. Our mission is to ensure that all Marylanders have access to quality affordable health care coverage, and one of our top priorities is health equity. This bill would create a Commission of Public Health to assess the capability of Maryland's health departments to provide foundational public health services, including responses to COVID-19, overdose deaths, and racial and ethnic inequities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes. We thank the Committee for all of its leadership which has resulted in over 400,000 Marylanders getting health coverage since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and in the creation of programs to improve health equity like those enabled by the Health Equity Resource Act. House Bill 214 will continue Maryland's progress and we urge the Committee to give a favorable report.