



January 26, 2023

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 214 – Commission on Public Health - Establishment – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk,

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) is submitting this letter of support for *HB 214 - Commission on Public Health – Establishment*. The bill would create a Commission on Public Health (Commission) to make recommendations to improve the delivery of foundational public health services in the State. The bill requires the Commission, by October 1, 2024, to conduct an assessment of the capability of the Maryland Department of Health and local health departments to provide foundational public health services and requiring an assessment to consider the State's response to COVID-19, overdose deaths, and to racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes in the State.

We agree that it is to everyone's benefit to make sure that there is a strong robust public health infrastructure in the State. A strong public health infrastructure includes a capable and qualified workforce, up-to-date data and information systems, and agencies that can assess and respond to public health needs, such as those to prevent suicide, obesity, maternal and child health, and environmental health threats. The proposed work of the Commission aligns with many of the areas of focus for the MHCC.

We are very pleased to be named to this Commission and look forward to being an active participant. If you would like to discuss this legislation or our existing efforts, please contact Ben Steffen, Executive Director, Maryland Health Care Commission at ben.steffen@maryland.gov or Tracey DeShields, Director of Policy Development and External Affairs at tracey.deshields2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Ben Steffen,
Executive Director

cc: HGO Committee