



## Senate Bill 628

### *School-Based Health Centers – Services, Infrastructure, and Funding*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance and Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committees

Date: February 28, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 628. This bill would support counties in their endeavors to establish and expand school-based health centers by tasking the Maryland Department of Health with establishing a funding formula for cost-sharing capital expenses related to the establishment and expansion of these important facilities.

Currently, counties are largely on their own if they wish to create school-based health centers, receiving little technical assistance or financial support from the State. In the meantime, counties have found creative ways to provide students and families with critical health services, partnering with community nonprofits and private industry. For example, Queen Anne’s County recently entered into a contract with the local board of education and a private health care provider to build a first-of-its-kind public health care center to comprehensively serve needs of nearby schools, county and school staff, and the greater community – and several other counties are interested in adopting a similar approach.

The priority and aspiration to provide health services for students and their families – whether via school-based health centers or other means – is universal for all counties and counties welcome the opportunity presented in SB 628 to partner with the State to do so. SB 628 can be a strong first step in what counties desire to be a strong, important partnership to improve the lives and educational experience of Maryland students. The science is clear: when children are healthy – physically and mentally – they are better equipped to succeed in school.

Counties see SB 628 as an important investment in Maryland’s students and in public health infrastructure. It is smart public policy that nicely complements the progress counties have independently made to establish and expand school-based health centers. Counties stand ready to work with the State to advance these mutual goals via this initiative and others. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 628 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.