



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

February 11, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 486 - School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers - Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 486 - School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers. This bill requires the Department and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) jointly to conduct an assessment of ten types of school health and wellness personnel each year, and alters the membership of the Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers (CASBHC) to include one school nurse to be nominated by the Maryland Association of School Health Nurses.

The Department supports the addition of a school nurse to CASBHC. School nurses are a crucial part of the infrastructure that allows school-based health centers to seamlessly integrate into their local schools, school communities, and the broader healthcare system. As key partners with school-based health centers, school nurses should be included as voting members of CASBHC.

The annual assessment of ten different types of school health and wellness personnel required by the bill would impose a significant fiscal and administrative burden on the Department. The proposed assessment requires an annual assessment of school health nurses, as well as other school health and wellness personnel types. The assessment is broad in scope, and is beyond the current staffing levels of the Department. Further, the Department does not have oversight of or expertise in any of the school health and wellness personnel except for school nurses. The SBHC program is separate from in-school school health nurses and are separate clinics operated on school campuses by local health care partners, and their staff recruitment is outside the purview of the Department; the annual assessment would not aid them.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the bill, the Department and MSDE would need to jointly convene a cross-agency workgroup solely for this purpose. The Department estimates that its

own staffing needs include a permanent project coordinator and data analyst, totaling \$158,702 beginning in SFY27, exclusive of any fiscal impact on MSDE.

The Department proposes the attached amendment to strengthen this bill by removing the significant fiscal and administrative burden while maintaining the important addition of a school nurse to CASBHC. The proposed amendments would eliminate in its entirety the fiscal impact on the Department.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott".

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

Attachment:
Amendment to Senate Bill 486

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 486
(First Reading File Bill)

Starting on page 3, strike in their entirety line 20, through page 4, line 23, inclusive.