



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Senate Bill (SB) 560 – Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity – Membership and Purposes- Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this Letter of Information for Senate Bill (SB) 560 - Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity – Membership and 3 Purposes.

SB 560 adds new commissioners to the Maryland Commission on Health Equity (MCHE), including the Commissioner of Corrections, the Secretary of the Environment, the Secretary of Veterans and Military Families, the Director of the Office of Health Care Quality, and a member of the Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition. SB 560 additionally adds access to transportation and proximity to health care facilities as factors that affect health that MCHE should examine.

Several of the commissioners outlined under SB 560 were previous members of MCHE, prior to a change in statute effective October 2024. Though the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) was not a formal member, they are represented by the Deputy Secretary for Public Health, who is a member of the MCHE and is able to represent any issues relevant to OHCQ's mission.

The Department agrees that transportation and proximity to health care facilities are key social determinants of health. However, MCHE is already required to use a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to make recommendations regarding the decision making processes of government agencies and private sector stakeholders. As a result, this requirement covers the examination of transportation as a factor impacting health.

With regard to examining proximity to health care facilities and primary care providers, SB 560 broadly defines a health care facility and references HG § 19–114(d)(1) which means hospitals, limited service hospitals, related institutions like assisted living programs, as defined in § 19-301, ambulatory surgical facilities, home health, hospice, freestanding medical facilities, inpatient facilities for the disabled, hence thousands of Maryland facilities. This broad analysis focused on only one factor impacting health would require substantive resources to complete. In

addition, the Department anticipates that an additional subcommittee would need to be formed to support this analysis.

The Department strongly supports the goals of improving health care quality and reducing healthcare disparities and looks forward to continued partnership with MCHE in the pursuit of these efforts.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs for the Maryland Department of Health at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LH Scott", is placed over a faint outline of the state of Maryland.

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH  
Secretary