



## **Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association**

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chairman Pamela Beidle

January 22, 2025

Senate Bill 0129 Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting

### **POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0129 Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting.

MRHA supports this legislation requiring the Maryland Commission on Health Equity to establish a health equity measures advisory committee that licensed hospitals in the state will be required to submit annual health equity reports to.

Rural communities in Maryland are challenged by a variety of health disparities. According to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, rural regions in Maryland experience disparities in number of chronic diseases as well as experiencing high rates of no health insurance, and shortages of primary and specialty health care resources.

The development of Health Equity Reports by licensed hospitals may bring greater attention to the disparities experienced by rural Marylanders, and the obligation to establish Health Equity Strategies to address these disparities will ensure progress towards diminishing them is made.

MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we urge you to support its passage.

On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,

*Jason Rush, MRHA Legislative and Policy Intern, 314-374-8951*