



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 672

DATE: February 12, 2025

SPONSOR: Delegate Cullison

ASSIGNED TO: Ways and Means Committee

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POSITION: FAVORABLE (Department of Health and Human Services)

School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers

House Bill 672 requires the State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Health jointly to assess school health and wellness personnel each year and adds a school nurse to the membership of the Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) fully supports this legislation.

Workforce assessments are imperative to the future of school health. Acute issues with recruitment and retention, vacancy and turnover rates of crucial school health and wellness personnel are challenging local school systems and health and human services agencies. While Montgomery County continues to identify alternative delivery of care models, expensive contract staffing, recruitment and retention strategies, and other options that may be available to help with our workforce needs, having a standard local and State-wide assessment to inform underlying and cross-jurisdictional issues will be an important tool.

MCDHHS' School Health Services provides health room services in 210 Montgomery County Public Schools and runs 16 School Based Health and Wellness Centers (SBHWCs) in 10 elementary schools and 6 high schools. School nurses manage SBHWCs at each in collaboration with a nurse practitioner, Certified Nurse Aide, a therapist and case managers. Having a school nurse on the Council provides an expert voice on the day-to-day clinic operations, shared responsibilities with the health rooms, and frontline issues affecting the students and the clinics. Adding a school nurse to the Council makes sense and will have an immediate, positive impact on the Council's discussions.

If House Bill 672 does not pass, each local jurisdiction will continue to struggle with ongoing staffing problems alone, including in SBHCs, and the absence of a nurse's voice advocating for the advancement of School-Based Health Centers on the Council means the strongest voices in school health care will continue to be missed. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 672 and encourages the committee to make school health and wellness a priority for Maryland.