



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

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: House Bill 1059 – Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life-Saving Treatments and Health Care (HEALTH) Fund and Income Check-Off – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 1059 – *Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life-Saving Treatments and Health Care (HEALTH) Fund and Income Check-Off*.

HB 1059 would establish a special, non-lapsing fund to assist Maryland Medical Assistance program (Medicaid) participants and individuals with health insurance with the health care costs associated with services and benefits provided under State law that are subject to federal restrictions. Furthermore, the legislation would require the Comptroller to provide an option for voluntary contributions on the income tax return form.

The Department notes that a very limited number of services covered by Medicaid today are paid for with State-only dollars today due to federal restrictions. The Hyde Amendment prohibits the use of federal funds for the provision of abortion, subject to exceptions in cases where the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest, or in cases where the woman suffers from a physical condition that would place her at risk of death.¹ Language attached to the Medicaid budget since 1979 authorizes the use of State funds to pay for abortions under specific circumstances. Similar language has been attached to the appropriation for the Maryland Children's Health Program since its advent in fiscal year 1999.

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.

¹ Liu, Edward C. & Shen, Wen W. (2022, July 20). *The Hyde Amendment: An Overview*. (CRS Report No. IF12167). <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12167>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Herrera Scott', written in a cursive style.

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