

Good afternoon, Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on HB0672. My name is Rabira Doshu, and I am here representing the Montgomery County School Health Council's student sub-group. MCSHC is devoted to advocating on behalf of the wellness of students throughout the county and broader across the state. We maintain a firm commitment to ensuring that all students have equitable access to wellness resources in a school environment.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the important role of school nurses in promoting the health of children, yet there remains alarming variability in how school health staff are distributed within school districts and states. My neighborhood in the Langley Park and Silver Spring community has served as a driving force and a place of inspiration for my advocacy journey. As a result of an interview series I conducted with students at my school regarding the Access to Care Act, I learned that some students who worked manual labor jobs on the weekends to support their families relied on home remedies and unlicensed drug usage to deal with injury and stress.

The passage of the Access to Care Act was a major leap towards creating a space where any Marylander regardless of immigration status can receive treatment. But, with all the daunting challenges of being a migrant teen getting the care they need and knowing where to go for support on top of familial responsibilities can be overwhelming.

I support HB0672, which would conduct further analysis and data collection on school health personnel. Not all individuals have the privilege of basic access to healthcare outside of the school space, leaving them with limited physical and mental care options.

This bill would provide legislators, future school wellness advocates, and local agencies with the tools to achieve an environment where students can all receive the necessary physical and mental support, just as any other student in their class. The bill also the Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers.

Because of this, I ask for your support in passing HB0672. Thank you for your time.

Best,

Rabira Doshu

Chair Montgomery County School Health Council Student Sub-Group