



**2025 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: **HB 1104 - Maryland Department of Health - AHEAD Model Implementation - Electronic Health Care Transactions and Population Health Improvement Fund**

COMMITTEE: **House - Health and Government Operations Committee**

POSITION: **Letter of Support**

BILL ANALYSIS: **HB 1104 establishes the Population Health Improvement Fund to support statewide population health targets under the States Advancing All-Payer Health Equity Approaches and Development (AHEAD) Model and any successor models; authorizes the Health Services Cost Review Commission to assess a certain amount in hospital rates to be credited to the fund; and clarifies that certain information may be used to support participation in the AHEAD model; etc.**

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) submit strong support for HB 1104. On November 1, 2024, Maryland became the first state in the country to enter into an agreement with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement the AHEAD model, a statewide effort to align population health efforts and improve healthcare quality, access to care, and health equity.

As the membership organization for Maryland's 24 local health officers, MACHO strongly supports the actions proposed under bill HB 1104. The Population Health Improvement Fund is an important first step in the development of a truly comprehensive health system in Maryland that recognizes that optimal health is not achieved within the four walls of a hospital or medical provider's office. The Population Health Improvement Fund would align public and private resources to improve health at the community level by engaging public health agencies, community-based organizations, primary care, hospital systems, and governmental partners at the local, state, and federal levels.

Maryland is fortunate to have a strong foundation to support statewide population health improvement efforts through its existing public health infrastructure. As the chief health strategists for their jurisdictions, Maryland's local health departments have extensive experience convening multisector partners, implementing evidence-based programming to improve health outcomes at the population level, and addressing health equity to ensure that all Marylanders can achieve their optimal health.

Building this existing infrastructure will expedite the State's work under the AHEAD model, leverage strong community partnerships, minimize duplication of efforts, and facilitate more effective resource utilization. The investment in public health through the establishment of a Population Health Improvement Fund has the potential to transform Maryland's health system and, more importantly, advance the health of Marylanders for generations to follow. Local health departments stand ready to move these efforts forward.

For these reasons, MACHO submits this Letter of Support for HB 1104. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*