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March 3, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and the Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1076 – Higher Education Institutions – Over-the-Counter Contraception – Access and Reporting, sponsored by Delegate Smith. This legislation represents a critical step in refining Maryland’s landmark efforts to ensure that every student at a public higher education institution has reliable, equitable, and transparent access to reproductive health services.

Since January 2025, MHEC has worked diligently to implement the mandates established by SB 341/HB 477 (2023) and SB 527/HB 367 (2024). Our efforts have been characterized by robust statewide collaboration. In June 2025, MHEC hosted a full-day convening at UMBC in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the American Society for Emergency Contraception (ASEC), and Upstream USA. We engaged 42 institutions and nearly 60 clinical and administrative leaders to develop implementation blueprints. This could not have happened without a vital partnership with the Commission on Women, who currently has been able to facilitate a grant in which \$10,000 awards are currently helping community colleges install wellness vending machines.

MHEC strongly supports the reporting alignment proposed in HB 1076. By establishing a synchronized annual deadline of September 1 for both public senior higher education institutions and community colleges to report to MHEC (followed by our consolidated report to the General Assembly by October 1) this bill creates a streamlined, efficient data collection process. This alignment ensures that the state receives a comprehensive, unified picture of reproductive health access across the entire public higher education landscape simultaneously.

Furthermore, we appreciate the clarity HB 1076 provides regarding the scope of over-the-counter (OTC) access. By explicitly requiring access to "all methods" of FDA-approved OTC contraception for all public institutions, the bill eliminates ambiguity and ensures that a student’s resources are not limited by the specific type of institution they attend. This "all methods" approach is essential for true equity of access.

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Maryland has already made significant strides in removing health-related barriers to student success. HB 1076 codifies the best practices we have identified during our initial implementation phase and provides the structural consistency needed for long-term sustainability.

For these reasons, the Maryland Higher Education Commission requests a favorable report on HB 1076.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Meghan Music, Executive Director of External and Legislative Affairs.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S K Rai". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Sanjay Rai

Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission