



**2026 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 882 – Consumer Health Information - Termination Date and Mandatory Funding for the State's Consumer Health Information Hub - Repeal
COMMITTEE: Senate – Finance Committee
POSITION: Letter of Support

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 882 repeals the termination date for the Health Information Hub and makes it permanent, repeals requirement Governor must include \$350k in annual appropriation for the Hub and reinforces requirement that state and local agencies (including local health departments) must use plain language when communicating with the public about health insurance, safety, and social services.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) submits this letter to offer strong support for HB 882. HB 882 seeks to make the State's Consumer Health Information Hub (Hub), run by the University of Maryland (the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy), permanent to allow it to continue its work indefinitely. Its job is to make sure Marylanders get health, safety, and social services information that is easy to understand (“plain language”) and available in their preferred languages.

As the membership organization for Maryland's 24 local health officers, MACHO strongly supports the actions proposed under HB 882. Since 2022, the Hub has assisted local health departments (LHDs) in innumerable ways such as: the creation of an easy-to-use plain language checklist, technical assistance on communication documents, free webinars providing training and education, statewide convenings for networking and hands-on learning opportunities, downloadable templates, and model language. The Hub's direct refinement of educational materials, coupled with the actionable insights provided in the Hub's newsletters and in-person and virtual meetings, has substantially improved outreach quality and assisted in building trust in the community for LHD messages and information. The Hub has also helped LHDs create positive changes in awareness, knowledge, and confidence in providing materials in plain language that reach our different populations in meaningful ways. Our LHDs would not have been able to accomplish all these activities without the training, technical experience, and guidance provided by the Hub as our staff tasked with these responsibilities do not have the time or resources to do these activities individually.

Maintaining the Hub as a central location for these kinds of critical resources is essential for LHDs to navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape and ensure their outreach remains effective and timely in years to come.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this Letter of support for HB 882. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaioral@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*