

Wes Moore
Governor

Usherla DeBerry
Director

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor



TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and the Members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
SUBJECT: Testimony on HB882 (Public Health - Consumer Health Information - Hub and Requirements)

Position: Favorable

HEARING DATE: March 24, 2026

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Usherla DeBerry, and I serve as the Director of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). I am writing to express our support for HB0882.

HB0882 ensures the continuation of the State's Consumer Health Information Hub by repealing its termination date and maintaining its role in providing clear, plain-language public health information. While this bill does not specifically reference Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing communities, its emphasis on accessible and understandable communication strongly aligns with ODHH's mission.

Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders often face barriers accessing critical health and safety information due to communication gaps and complex language. Plain-language public information supports equitable access and improves understanding for individuals who rely on American Sign Language, tactile communication, captioning, or translated materials. Clear and accurate information reduces confusion, prevents misinformation, and promotes better health and safety outcomes.

HB0882 supports effective government communication and reinforces the importance of accessibility across state agencies. These principles directly support ODHH's statutory role in improving access to services and serving as an information clearinghouse for the communities we represent.

For these reasons, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing respectfully supports HB0882 and urges a favorable report.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Usherla DeBerry

Director

Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing