



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the House Health Committee

Chair Heather Bagnall

Feb 25, 2026

House Bill 1423: Maryland Department of Health - Workgroup on Home- and Community-Based Services

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, Delegate Wims, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of House Bill 1423: Maryland Department of Health - Workgroup on Home- and Community-Based Services.

The MRHA supports the establishment of this diverse workgroup that seeks to evaluate home and community based services in order to increase accessibility, limit wait times, and improve provider reimbursement. The bill further emphasizes removing barriers to care and ensuring geographic diversity of program providers and recipients. We believe that the MRHA is able to provide unique insight into these specific topics that disproportionately impact those living in rural communities. As such, we support this bill with the amendment of including a representative from the MRHA as a member of this workgroup.

Studies demonstrate that individuals over the age of 65 comprise over 20% of the rural population (1). These individuals are more likely to experience chronic health conditions and face transportation barriers and provider shortages, which makes it difficult for them to access health care (2).

By creating a taskforce aimed at improving home and community based services, we have the opportunity to refine programs to make them more patient-centered and convenient for all Marylanders. The MRHA believes that our organization will be of great utility to this workgroup as we understand the unique access and geographic barriers that many rural Marylanders face. As such, we would appreciate your support of House Bill 1423 with the amendment stipulating that a representative from the MRHA will serve as a member in the workgroup.

With appreciation,

The Maryland Rural Health Association

P.O. Box 3128 LaVale, MD 21504

1. Cohen, Steven A, and Mary L Greaney. "Aging in Rural Communities." *Current epidemiology reports* vol. 10,1 (2023): 1-16.
2. Maganty, Avinash et al. "Barriers to rural health care from the provider perspective." *Rural and remote health* vol. 23,2 (2023): 7769.