

TERRI L. HILL, M.D.
Legislative District 12
Baltimore and Howard Counties



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 214
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3378 · 301-858-3378
800-492-7122 Ext. 3378
Fax 410-841-3197 · 301-858-3197
Terri.Hill@house.state.md.us

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
and Estates and Trusts

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

District Office
410-884-4380
Fax 410-884-5481

2/26/2020

HB819 – Support

Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities.

Dear Chairman Pendergrass, Chairman Clippinger, and members of the Health and Government Operations and Judiciary Committees,

HB819 seeks to improve the health of inmates in Maryland correctional facilities and Maryland hospitals patients by requiring plant based food options be incorporated as part of the standard menu offerings. We seek to do so not just because it is right to be concerned about their health but also because the failure to do better keeping them healthy, is costly to the state, particularly where inmates are concerned. Maryland spends \$150 million per year on inmate healthcare and 30% of the cost is on chronic degenerative diseases that can be improved and reversed through healthy plant-based meals.

The bill, if passed, would require that the Master Cycle Menu used in correctional institutes include 100% plant-based meal options at least one time per week. The bill, at the same time, would allow inmates to opt into receiving 100% plant-based meals upon request without requiring a doctor's note or religious accommodation.

Currently, while correctional facilities do offer lacto/ovo vegetarian options for each meal, they do not include whole meals rich in complex carbohydrates. Research has shown that the consumption of these complex carbohydrates can be instrumental in reducing and reversing chronic diseases that require medications to manage. Heart disease is the number cause of death for all Maryland Residents, including inmates in correctional facilities, which can be reversed through plant-based nutrition.

In 2019, Maryland entered into a five (5) year \$680 million contract w/ Corizon to provide healthcare in our correctional facilities. The bill includes a reporting requirement to provide oversight and transparency, so that any changes in illness or diagnoses of inmates that may result from the implementation of this legislation may be documented.

The Maryland Department of Health will be required to provide all health care providers in hospitals and correctional facilities information on how to become trained and board certified in plant-based nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine, an important tool in helping health care providers address the approximately 30% of inmates who may suffer from chronic degenerative disease.

In conclusion, the end goal is simple: Better food choices, physically and mentally healthier inmates all while reducing medical costs. I ask for a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri Hill'.

Terri Hill, M.D.