

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**House Bill 59**  
**Task Force on Higher Education Students with Chronic Health Condition**  
**January 20, 2021**  
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**University System of Maryland**  
**Information**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 59. The bill establishes the Task Force on Higher Education Students with Chronic Health Conditions. The ways in which to improve services to students is a process the University System of Maryland (USM) always seeks to explore.

Generally, the USM institutions do not have the right or capability to ask every student about their medical status (beyond vaccination history or other information that would directly create potential public health risks) or otherwise compel students to submit a health history. USM institutions would only be privy to knowledge of a "chronic health condition" when a student visits a health center and chooses to disclose that information. In campus offices of disability services, students self-identify in order to request specific academic accommodations and services and are deemed eligible for such services upon submission of appropriate documentation of a disabling and functionally limiting condition.

Conceivably, there could be hundreds of different conditions within the umbrella of "chronic health conditions" even though USM health directors and disability services offices don't categorize all of these diagnoses using that terminology. For example, would the Task Force want to deliberate the inclusion of thousands of students currently taking medication or seeking long-term counseling for anxiety or depression? Most of these students are under the care of their own health care providers and have not identified themselves to our health centers or disability services. Additionally, a "chronic health condition" is protected information. To the extent that a task force could help shed light on privacy issues could be of interest.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share these thoughts.

