



## **Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association**

To the Appropriations Committee

February 25, 2021

House Bill 1123 Local Health Departments – Funding

### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, Delegate Reznik, and members of the Appropriations Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 1123 Local Health Departments – Funding.

MRHA supports this legislation that would expand revenues and expenditures for local health departments and expands the programs and related administrative expenses for which Core Public Health Services funds may be used for.

This increased funding to local health departments is desperately needed in rural Maryland. Access to quality health care is limited in rural communities, and the programs and services supplied by local health departments to ensure continuity of care are essential and are a trusted community resource. MRHA supports this effort to invest in the state's local health departments, public health programs and community initiatives.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

And while Maryland is one of the richest states, there is great disparity in how wealth is distributed. The greatest portion of wealth resides around the Baltimore/Washington Region; while further away from the I-95 corridor, differences in the social and economic environment are very apparent.

MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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