



January 27, 2021

Senate Bill 172

Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Position: FAVORABLE

The Anne Arundel County Administration **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 172 - Maryland Health Equity Resource Act. This Bill would require the Secretary of Health to designate certain areas as Health Equity Resource Communities, with the purpose of reducing health disparities, improving health outcomes, and reducing health care costs and hospital admissions and readmissions.

COVID-19 has only heightened the health disparities that already existed in our communities, and as we continue to fight this pandemic, it is critical that we ensure health resources are going to the areas that have the most need. This legislation would play a critical step in eliminating inequities in our health care system and our communities.

The recent report from the Senate President's Advisory Workgroup on Equity and Inclusion calls for action in this area during the 2021 Maryland General Assembly Session, and highlights the success of the 2012-2016 Health Enterprise Zones, which this legislation is modeled after. Senate Bill 172 would expand this success by establishing Health Equity Resource Communities across the state, which would fund community developed plans to put resources and medical and public health plans into disadvantaged areas of the state.

Anne Arundel County has recently revamped the Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition (HAAC). The priorities for HAAC, chosen by community members, seek to reduce health disparities, improve access to care, and improve health outcomes. We strongly support SB172 which will help the county achieve these goals.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 172.