

My name is David Glenn and I live in Silver Spring, in District 19. As a registered nurse, I see every day that patients' ability to maintain good health is heavily shaped by where they live. Entrenched patterns of racial and economic injustice mean that some Marylanders have far more exposure than others to environmental hazards that can cause asthma or cancer. Entrenched patterns of racial and economic injustice mean that some Marylanders have far easier access than others to cancer screening, HIV treatment, and other crucial elements of health care.

That's why I urge every member of the Assembly to support HB463/SB172, which would provide new health resources for the Maryland communities that need them most.

The bill would establish Health Equity Resource Communities, which would provide grants and incentives for health providers to offer new kinds of care in neighborhoods with some of the state's worst health outcomes. These new resources should reduce barriers to care and reduce visits to hospitals' emergency departments, potentially bringing down costs for the health system as a whole.

In my work as a nurse and in my volunteer activism with Progressive Maryland, I'm often astonished by the severity of place-based health disparities in our state. The Baltimore City Health Department [estimated in 2017](#) that life expectancy at birth in the city's most affluent neighborhoods is as high as 84 -- but in the city's most resource-deprived neighborhoods, it's as low as 66.9. In Prince George's County, [a 2019 report](#) found that 69.3 percent of white, non-Hispanic expectant mothers received adequate prenatal care, but that only 53.3 percent of Hispanic mothers received

adequate prenatal care. Meanwhile, we have all seen the stark patterns of place-based disparities in COVID-19 cases and deaths over the last year. Two of the hardest hit zip codes, 20902 and 20906, are near my home in Silver Spring.

The financing mechanism for HB463/SB172 -- a 1 percent tax on alcohol sales -- seems like an excellent tool for the job. The experience of other states suggests that higher taxes will at least modestly reduce alcohol consumption. As an oncology nurse, I know that alcohol is an underappreciated risk factor for several types of cancer. Just last week, the American Cancer Society released a [report](#) estimating that 4.6 percent of Maryland's cancer cases among adults older than 30 during the period 2013-2016 could be attributed to alcohol consumption.

During the last year, Marylanders have been through a severe public health crisis and a severe economic crisis. I'm sure those crises are weighing on the minds of every member of the Assembly. I urge you all to support HB463/SB172, which would help move Maryland toward better health and a stronger, fairer society.