



6811 Campfield Road
Baltimore, MD 21207

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Budget & Taxation

FROM: LeadingAge Maryland

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 563, Local Health Departments - Funding

DATE: February 17, 2021

POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland writes to request a favorable report on Senate Bill 563, Local Health Departments - Funding.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. We represent more than 120 not-for-profit organizations, including the vast majority of CCRCs in Maryland. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill specifies the amount of funding required to be included in the State budget for local health services for upcoming fiscal years and alters the purposes for which local health department funding may be used to include protective equipment for health care personnel and materials appropriate to prepare for potential communicable disease emergencies.

COVID-19 has revealed the true importance of a strong and sustainable public health infrastructure. Local health departments provide a variety of supports to older adults living in the broader community. Most recently local health departments have been tasked with coordinating on site vaccine clinics for senior housing settings in their jurisdictions. This task has stressed the departments' limited capacity. LeadingAge Maryland works closely with local

health departments which are vital and critical partners regardless of whether there is an ongoing pandemic. These agencies were struggling with resources before COVID-19 and the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. In light of the last year, local health departments deserve sufficient funding to meet their mission.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 563.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992