



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis  
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee  
Room 231, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: HB 1294 – Public Health - Businesses and Retail Establishments - Hand Sanitizer – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Davis and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is submitting this letter of information for House Bill 1294 (HB 1294) titled: “Public Health - Businesses and Retail Establishments - Hand Sanitizer.” This bill would require any business with a touch screen for use by a customer to provide hand sanitizer at each touch screen. HB 1294 also authorizes MDH to adopt regulations to carry out this section.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 response efforts, MDH unfortunately does not have the personnel resources to participate if this bill is passed. Many of MDH’s current employees have already increased their workload and absorbed additional tasks that are critical to the COVID-19 response.

MDH further notes that it already advises businesses on best practices regarding infection prevention for COVID-19, in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Commerce. In addition to this, local health authorities have responded to public concerns and complaints by continuing to educate businesses about the importance of infection control practices, including the use of hand sanitizer or hand washing facilities as appropriate. However, HB 1294 would require MDH to develop a specific protocol in response to complaints regarding hand sanitizer (to be carried out by local health departments). Due to the high volume of establishments that would be covered under this legislation, this has the potential to divert a significant number of personnel in MDH and local health departments away from other essential public health activities.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at (410) 260-3190 or [webster.ye@maryland.gov](mailto:webster.ye@maryland.gov) or Heather Shek, Director of Government Affairs at the same number or [heather.shek@maryland.gov](mailto:heather.shek@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Webster Ye  
Assistant Secretary for Health Policy