



The Arc Maryland  
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**HB463: Maryland Health Equity Resource Act**  
**Health and Government Operations Committee**  
**February 2, 2021**

**Position: Support**

The Arc Maryland is a statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We support HB 463/SB 172 as we believe it will address inequities by race, ethnicity, **disability**, and geography and help ensure that every Marylander has access to the healthcare they need.

Health inequities based on race, ethnicity, disability, and place of residence persist throughout the state and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We join fellow coalition members in our advocacy for the creation of these health equity communities, and support the funding of this initiative through an additional 1 cent alcohol sales tax increase. In order to succeed, this program must have a permanent and dedicated funding source. In the past, Maryland passed minor increases to the alcohol tax to fund community developmental disabilities services. The increases not only created the needed revenue stream for these critical services, but also are shown to have resulted in reductions of underage drinking and drunk driving throughout the state.

There is a delay built into the bill, on the alcohol tax increase, in recognition of the impacts of the pandemic on the hospitality industry. Alcohol consumed in bars and restaurants will not be assessed the additional penny for two years.

We hope Maryland commits to improving healthcare equity which we believe will be accomplished through the enactment of HB 463/SB 172.

Sincerely,

Ande Kolp  
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