



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

February 23, 2021

The Hon. Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: HB 836 - COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccination Act of 2021 - Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on House Bill (HB) 836 - COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccination Act of 2021. HB 836 mandates appropriations in the form of grants to local jurisdictions, home health agencies, and long-term care facilities. This bill would also require that MDH meet certain benchmarks including, the capacity to perform 100,000 COVID-19 tests per day, categorizing residents for priority access to the vaccine, and creating a timeline for each category to receive the vaccine.

The mandates required under HB 836 would total \$54.5 million in FY 2021 and \$98 million in FY 2022 in the form of grants to long-term care facilities, home health agencies, and local jurisdictions. We appreciate the legislature's intent to deliver funding to local health departments and to the aforementioned facilities. The Committee should be aware, however, that MDH is required to comply with any federal conditions of award for current and future federal COVID-19 relief that may conflict with the specific mandated appropriations that are required by this bill.

MDH thanks the General Assembly for its support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and looks forward to our continued partnership as we continue in our response efforts. We would welcome working with the legislature and relevant stakeholders to establish the Maryland Public Health Job Corps and a Maryland Public Health Infrastructure Modernization Workgroup. MDH will continue to work with the General Assembly on the State's pandemic response, including assessing appropriate COVID-19 testing and vaccination benchmarks in accordance with Maryland's unique needs and the recommendations of public health experts.

I hope this information is useful. If you have questions or need more information about this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 260-3190 or [webster.ye@maryland.gov](mailto:webster.ye@maryland.gov) or Heather Shek, Deputy Director, Office Of Governmental Affairs at the same number or [heather.shek@maryland.gov](mailto:heather.shek@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Webster Ye".

Webster Ye  
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy