

February 2, 2021

Testimony on House Bill 463  
Maryland Health Equity Resource Act  
House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1100 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We strongly urge you to support House Bill 463.

The pandemic demonstrated the tenuous capacity of our public health system, and tragically the ongoing disparities in health care, health outcomes, and susceptibility to disease based on race and income in our state. While Maryland has taken significant steps in recent years to expand access to health care through Medicaid and other programs, COVID-19 has brought home these shortcomings.

People should not have difficulty accessing primary and specialty health care because of where they live or who they are. House Bill 463 will address inequities by race, ethnicity, disability, and geography and help ensure that every Marylander has access to the healthcare they deserve.

The one penny per dollar increase in the state alcohol sales tax proposed in House Bill 463 would be a simple way to fund the Health Equity Resource Communities. To succeed this program should have an adequate and consistent funding source. In addition, alcohol tax increases are proven to save lives by reducing underage drinking and drunk driving.

The legislation recognizes the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality industry by delaying the impact of the tax on alcohol consumed in bars and restaurants for two years.

We urge you to help make Maryland a healthier and fairer state for all our people by giving House Bill 465 a favorable report.

Henry Bogdan  
Policy Director  
[hbogdan@mdnonprofit.org](mailto:hbogdan@mdnonprofit.org)