



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

March 30, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 741 - 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 Senate Bill (SB) 741 - COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccination Act of 2021. SB 741 mandates appropriations in the form of grants to local jurisdictions, home health agencies, and long-term care facilities. Additionally, MDH, in collaboration with local health departments, would be required to create and implement a 2-year plan to respond to COVID-19 by June 1, 2021.

The mandates required under SB 741 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 would like to discuss this further, please contact me at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov or Director of Governmental Affairs at the same phone number or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy