



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 29, 2022

**Testimony in support of HB 1327
Education – Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students – Report**

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to present **House Bill 1327** to study the Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students. This bill would create a group to study the Home and Hospital Teaching Program here in Maryland and determine if enough is being done to reintegrate students back into traditional schools.

The Home and Hospital Program is an educational service for students who have medical, physical, and/or disciplinary challenges. When students are experiencing physical or emotional conditions that make it impossible for them to attend school, this program lets them continue their education. However, the program must be improved. As it exists now, it does not prepare students for reintegration into a classroom learning environment, especially in the cases presented by students whose behavioral or emotional condition makes it difficult for them to attend school. These students remain out of school for excessive periods of time, and often when they do return to a classroom, the school is not prepared with an adequate re-entry plan. This is not just traumatic for the students but traumatic for everyone around them.

The goals of this bill which passed the House in 2019 unanimously, are 5 fold: (1) to require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to assess whether students in Home and Hospital Teaching program are receiving adequate support and instructional time to successfully transition back to the classroom; (2) MSDE would also analyze whether local school systems have sufficient staffing to coordinate instructional services for students; (3) study whether transition plans for students returning to the classroom should be implemented and, if so, the viability of having school counselors lead and develop those plans; (4) assess whether any transition plans should be reviewed or evaluated by a licensed medical professional prior to implementation; and (5) make recommendations regarding any statutory or regulatory changes to the Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students.

On and off during the last two years, students have been learning away from the classroom. I think it is fair to say that there are some things we have learned regarding education outside of a classroom setting that can be used to bolster the Home and Hospital Program. We need to see

exactly where the program struggles so that we may address those difficulties as efficiently and mindfully as possible in the future.

In light of all this, I request a favorable report.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Bhandari", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honorable Delegate Harry Bhandari
Maryland Legislative District 8