



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** **SB607 – Health Equity Resource Communities – Modifications**

**SPONSOR:** **Senators Hayes, Feldman, Guzzone, Griffith, and Kelley**

**COMMITTEE:** **Finance**

**CONTACT:** **Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411**

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**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 607**, which would require the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP) to provide technical assistance (TA) to the Community Health Resource Commission (CHRC) for implementing Health Equity Resource Communities (HERC) as outlined in existing law and would allow compensation for this TA using HERC funds. The bill also allows CHRC to hire program staff using HERC funds.

The Prince George's County Health Department was one of the entities funded by the CHRC for a Health Enterprise Zone (HEZ) project, the precursor for HERC legislation. PGCHD's HEZ created an effective value-based system of care in a significantly underserved zip code (20743) of ~40,000 residents. The program:

- Established a model for care coordination that continues to serve as the basis for population health management in Prince George's County
- Engaged the community and established effective partnerships
- Increased access to primary care medical homes – 58,451 total patients visits at HEZ medical practices (41,614 individual patients)
- Increased community health literacy and expanded the community workforce
- Introduced behavioral health integration
- **Demonstrated a significant reduction in:**
  - **Hospital visits (between 16% - 42%)**
  - **Hospital costs (between 30% - 54%)**

The success of PGCHD's HEZ was quantifiable using CRISP data and would not have been possible without funding from CHRC. **SB 607** would ensure adequate infrastructure in the new HERC program that builds on the previous work of the HEZs across Maryland. Prince George's County's HEZ clearly resulted in cost savings for the medical system, improved community health, and increased access to care for

the population of 20743. PGCHD's newly acquired Pathways grant will build on this work using new funding for HERCs to implement a similar model throughout the county in zip codes experiencing high rates of health disparities. Prince George's County recognizes how critical this programming is to improving health equity in Maryland, and therefore supports any effort to ensure the program is adequately staffed and supported with health information technology.

For the reason stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 607** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.