



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

To the House Health and Government Operation Committee

Chair: Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk

February 24, 2023

**House Bill 596: Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 596: Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023.

The Maryland Rural Health Association recently participated in the three rural roundtables hosted by the Rural Maryland Council and Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland where we firsthand listened to the many of the most pressing non-emergency medical transportation challenges across Maryland. Tens of thousands of Marylanders each year miss critical medical appointments thus furthering their healthcare challenges but also creating financial burdens on the medical system. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services directly state, "Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is an important benefit for people who need assistance getting to and from medical appointments."

MRHA believes that HB0596 is a great first step in addressing these most pressing challenges that greatly and primarily affect rural residents of Maryland across the 18 designated rural counties across the state.

*Sincerely,*

*Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director*

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