



Maryland
Hospital Association

**House Bill 460 -
Department of Housing and Community Development - Racial Equity Impact Assessment**

Position: *Support*

February 17, 2023

House Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 460, which requires an annual racial equity impact assessment be made public. These analyses are critical for a comprehensive approach to bolster success on the state's population health and prevention strategies.

Maryland hospitals care for millions of people each year, around-the-clock. In addition to the care they provide, they continuously evaluate factors inside and outside of their organizations to promote the health and well-being of the populations they serve and the tens of thousands they employ. Hospitals are committed to addressing the social drivers of health, which include cross-sector collaboration and investments in the community.

Maryland is consistently identified as one of the richest states in the nation, with a median household income of approximately \$90,000—well above the national average according to U.S. News & World Report.¹ However, the state also has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest rates of income inequality. Marginalized communities in Maryland struggle with social and economic adversity. Access to affordable housing, educational opportunities, reliable transportation, healthy food, safe play spaces, and health care are not equally distributed throughout the state. To fully address the systemic issues facing many of Maryland's communities and meaningfully improve the health of all Marylanders, issues beyond direct medical care must be considered.

Environmental, economic, and social factors play a role in determining health outcomes and contribute to health inequities.² The assessments created by this bill represent a systematic approach to address inequities in access to life-enhancing resources. Findings from these assessments are critical for generating solutions and to address adverse impacts to health-related systemic inequity.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on HB 460.

¹ US News & World Report. Fitzgerald, Madeline. "The 10 Richest States in America." [usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/10-wealthiest-states-in-america?onpage](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/10-wealthiest-states-in-america?onpage) (accessed October 7, 2022).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "NCHHSTP Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Frequently Asked Questions." [cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html). (accessed February 17, 2023).

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