



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 31, 2023

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair, House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 60 - Housing Innovation Pilot Program and Housing Innovation Fund - Establishment (Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2023)

Dear Chair Barve:

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 60, which would establish a fund in the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide loans to local housing authorities for mixed-income, cross-subsidized housing and increase the volume of housing production. Access to quality, affordable, and stable housing leads to better health outcomes.

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 the 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 includes cross-sector collaboration.

The Department of Health and Human Services defines housing insecurity as high housing costs in proportion to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhoods, overcrowding, or homelessness.¹ As an important social determinant of health, housing security must be addressed when developing goals for accessibility or quality of care. Unstable housing can increase the risk of infectious or chronic disease and exacerbate previously existing health conditions.² HB 60 would help local housing authorities increase the production of affordable housing units.

Housing is one of the best-researched social determinants of health and addressing housing insecurity has been found to improve health outcomes and decrease health care costs.ⁱⁱ

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 60.

For more information, please contact:
Brian Sims, Vice President, Quality & Equity
Bsims@mhaonline.org

¹ Cutts, D. B., Meyers, A. F., Black, M. M., Casey, P. H., Chilton, M., Cook, J. T., Geppert, J., Ettinger de Cuba, S., Heeren, T., Coleman, S., Rose-Jacobs, R. Frank, D. A. (2011). US Housing insecurity and the health of very young children. *American journal of public health*, 101(8), 1508-14. Retrieved from: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134514/

² Taylor, L. (2018). Housing and Health: An Overview of the Literature. *Health Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577/>.