



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 18, 2020

To: The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

From: Jennifer Witten, Vice President, Government Affairs, Maryland Hospital Association

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 716- Maryland Council on Health in All Policies -
Establishment

Dear Chairman Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 61 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 716. Maryland's hospitals care for millions of people each year, treating 2.3 million in emergency departments and delivering more than 67,000 babies. The 108,000 people they employ are [caring for Maryland](#) around-the-clock every day—delivering leading edge, high-quality medical service and investing a combined \$1.75 billion in their communities, expanding access to housing, education, transportation, and food.

Under Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. The result: hospitals promote the health of whole communities, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors that influence people's health. These interventions range from supporting healthy food programs that assist with chronic disease self-management to owning and operating apartments to assist with safe and stable housing.

In 2019, MHA established a Health Equity Task Force to support hospitals' efforts to address social influencers of health, reduce disparities in health outcomes, and influence public policy across all domains that affect health. Maryland's hospitals support SB 716, which will break down silos and foster collaboration through the health in all policies framework. This will encourage government agencies to consider the impact decision-making processes can have on health outcomes.¹ MHA is pleased to be named as a member of the Health in All Policies Council. We recommend that in addition to the areas addressed in the legislation, the council explore the lack of access to healthy foods and health literacy.

For more information, please contact:

Jennifer Witten
Jwitten@mhaonline.org

¹ Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute.