Maryland
Hospital Association

February 22, 2022

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Information - Senate Bill 607- Health Equity Resource Communities - Modifications

Dear Chair Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 607. Last year, MHA fully supported the effort by the General Assembly to pass landmark legislation creating Health Equity Resource Communities.

We applaud the work of the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) to launch the Pathways to Health Equity Program. The Commission has done a significant amount of work with limited resources. The Pathways program, funded through the state COVID Relief Act, was intended to quickly fund programs to address disparities, specifically those exacerbated by the pandemic. The Pathways RFP was issued in the fall of 2021, and this month pathways awardees were announced.

CHRC advanced this important program with just two full-time staff members. We understand CHRC is hiring a full-time staff member to manage the permanent HERC program. MHA believes with the additional time afforded in SB 607 and the additional staff member to coordinate HERC activities, CHRC can fulfill the original intent of the bill MHA and other stakeholders championed. A full evaluation of the Pathways program will inform HERC program development with the lessons learned from these initial seed grants.

We hope you find this information useful as you deliberate on Senate Bill 607.

For more information, please contact:
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