



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 129 Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity –
Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting**

Position: *Letter of Information*

January 30, 2025

Senate Finance Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 129.

Maryland hospitals are committed to addressing health disparities and improving population health outcomes. Our hospitals drive innovation under Maryland's unique Model through health care payment reform. In the All-Payer Model and the Total Cost of Care Model, hospitals have reduced disparities in unplanned readmissions, preventable admissions, and timely follow-up care.

The AHEAD Model, the latest iteration of Maryland's unique health care payment system, builds on this legacy with an even greater focus on equity and population health. Under AHEAD, Maryland will develop a statewide health equity plan that will elevate community voices as we seek to integrate and align resources across clinical and population health needs to overcome systemic and structural racial and ethnic health inequities. In developing this plan, the state will set specific statewide health equity and population health targets.

The AHEAD Model requires Maryland to develop a model governance structure to oversee this work. According to the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Commission on Health Equity (MCHE) is to serve as the governing entity. The MCHE will advise on the state's approach and development of its health equity strategy and oversee its implementation. Statewide data, very similar to what is contemplated in SB 129, will be collected and used to inform the strategies to advance health equity and improve population health.

While supportive of the overall goals of SB 129, MHA is concerned that implementing this framework is premature as it may duplicate, conflict with, and/or be subsumed by the work that will be done to implement the AHEAD Model. As a member of the MCHE, MHA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the bill sponsor and other stakeholders to ensure that their interests are represented in the development of the state's equity policies. The Maryland General Assembly also is represented on MCHE and can be directly engaged in this critical work.

For these reasons, we respectfully submit this letter for consideration and appreciate the opportunity to comment on SB 129.

For more information, please contact:

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