



Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Health Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual by Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Sara Seitz, John Hartline, Carmen Pendleton, Diana Hsu, Judith Walker, Jurt Rogers, David Stewart, Patricia Meyer, N. Flaherty, Melissa Kelly, Jamie Cardillo, Jonathan Dayton, Nan Mann, Mayor Zack Tyndall, Daniel Schneckeburger, Greg Miller

RMC Staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Molli Cole, Leslie Downtin

RMC Housing Committee Chair, Sara Seitz, welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 10:02 am. Chair Seitz asked the committee to introduce themselves. **The committee was asked to review the November 29, 2023, meeting minutes. John Hartline motioned to approve the minutes. Melissa Kelly seconded the motion. The November 29, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

The Committee Chair read the mission and vision from the November 29, 2023 meeting exercise. “Access to care across any area of health is the focus. The Committee discussed the following legislation:

- **HB522/SB492: Public Schools – Student Telehealth Appointments – Policy and Access (RMC Support - Hearing 2/28 in the Senate)** Charlotte stated that the Legislative Committee supports this bill and intend to submit a written support letter. Ms. Davis stated that this is a requirement on local education so the local Board of Education, needs to establish a policy to accommodate the students. The Committee discussed this as a pathway to access to telehealth. The bill mentions that the policy needs to include a designated space that is private—not a bathroom or closet. Support – Submit testimony.
- **HB425/SB359: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact (RMC Support-Testimony Submitted).** This bill is to address healthcare workforce issues. Ms. Davis stated that HB425 is up for 3rd reader tomorrow. Chair, Sara Sietz remarked, “Appropriate flexibility within licensure is really important.” MHA supported it.
- **HB1096/SB427: Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program (Hearing 3/1).** This bill authorizes community-based organizations to establish the Program. The bill was added to the Agenda for Legislative Committee to review. Health Committee Supports.
- **SB786: Task Force on Access to Pharmacy Services and the Impact of Telepharmacy in Maryland (Hearing 2/23).** Chair Seitz commented that it speaks to RMC legislative priorities and the bill has a strong rural influence in the reading of it. Rural partners are named in the Bill. Senator Mike McKay is the sponsor.
- **HB1054: Physicians - Licensing - Foreign Practicing Physicians (Hearing 3/5)-** This bill allows an ease of licensing for United States citizens who earned their doctorate of medicine outside of the U.S. It also allows foreign-born physicians who have done a U.S. residency in the U.S. to remain in the US and work. Health Committee Supports. The bill will be added to the Legislative Committee agenda for review.
- **SB691/HB899: Higher Education – Firefighters and EMS Recruitment and Retention – Scholarship and Loan Repayment Assistance (House Hearing 3/6 and Senate Hearing 2/28).** This bill prepares for a

Maryland loan assistance repayment program for firefighters and EMS workers, as well as scholarships. Health Committee Supports. The bill will be added to the Legislative Committee agenda for review.

- **HB354:** Maryland Pathway to Nursing Program and Advisory Committee – This bill includes a pilot program to offer education fiscal support as well as fiscal support of supportive services for those who are CNAs (certified nursing assistant) to move into LPN (licensed practical nurse) with an RN (registered nurse) degree. The Legislative Committee is monitoring and supporting SB718 – the same title, but a different Bill.
- **SB137:** Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Workgroup (Hearing 2/13)- Monitor.

Other Legislation:

- Committee members shared bills outside of the health system focus but have a health system impact.
 - **HB32** Caregiver Tax Credit – Caregiver burden is a real health system issue.
 - **SB0142** – Genetic Testing – Prohibitions on Disability, Life, and long-term care insurance. This bill relates to insurance companies' requirement to not deny services if someone is getting genetic testing for their healthcare.
 - **SB0778** – Hearing Aids for adults to require coverage
 - **HB0698** – Estates and Trusts, Guardianship of Disabled Persons and Expedited Review. (Opposed) Speaks to patient rights. The Committee discussed that this bill is a Maryland Health Association priority. Two main issues include the delay from courts and that it is unfair for hospitals to have to bear the burden of being social services.
 - **SB167/HB806** - Physician Assistants - Revisions. Supported.
 - **SB98** – Interagency Food Desert Advisory Committee Food Desert Bill

The Committee discussed budget concerns such as the new hospital in Easton, MD, and funding for community colleges. Cuts to community colleges will impact health care related training programs. Committee members shared upcoming news and events:

- ASO selected for next successor.
- MD apprenticeship connector is holding a webinar tomorrow at 9 a.m.
- Carelon Behavioral Health rebranded formerly known as Beacon Health –
- Goodwill Housing Strategies Health and Wellness event moved toward the end of summer.
- Maryland Rural Health Association Rural Training Summit, 4/29 at 10:00 am in Cumberland, at UPMC
- Support Health Committee policy work at the MACo, Summer Conference
- RMC grant cycle will open at the end of April. LOI's are due May 17th.

The Committee agrees that a subgroup meets before crossover occurs to discuss legislation. RMC staff will send out dates.

Chair Seitz expressed appreciation for everyone's participation - the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.