



Health and Wellness Council Legislative Workgroup Weekly Touchpoint

Tuesday, February 18 · 9:00 – 9:30am

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/roi-okrw-jrm>

Or dial: (US) +1 551-777-4549 PIN: 574 137 706#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/roi-okrw-jrm?pin=1560966323113>

Members Present:

Lindsay Lotter

Andrew Baker

Esa Davis

Mary Backley

Tara Clemons- Johnson

Teresa Titus-Howard

Members Not Present:

I. Opening/ Background

Teresa Titus-Howard brought the meeting to order. Roll was taken electronically. A quorum was present.

II. Presentation: Upcoming Legislation

Kate Natafagi, Health Policy Analyst, MDH Cancer and Chronic Disease Bureau presented information about bills currently before the Maryland General Assembly:

- [SB0646/ HB 970](#)- Health Insurance - Insulin - Prohibition on Step Therapy or Fail-First Protocols
- [SB 876/HB1489](#): Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity
- [HB1434](#): Food Deserts Workgroup – Establishment
- [HB1469](#): Taxes - Sugary Beverage Distributor Tax (For Our Kids Act)

III. Workgroup Discussion:

- SB 646/ HB 970: The workgroup determined that this bill should be reviewed by the Diabetes work group.
 - i. MDH staff to share legislation with Diabetes work group.
- SB 876/ HB 1489: Following a brief discussion of this bill, the work group determined that the council should submit a letter of support for this bill.
 - i. MDH staff to draft letter of support and circulate with the workgroup. A vote to approve/disapprove the language of the letter will be taken on 2/25/25.

- HB 1434: While the work group was receptive to this legislation, one member noted that the Food System Resiliency Council currently has a sub-group which addresses food deserts specifically. The work group decided to submit a supportive letter of information which recognizes the need for concerted efforts to address food deserts but encourages this council to collaborate with the Food System Resiliency Council.
 - i. MDH staff to draft letter of support and circulate with the workgroup. A vote to approve/disapprove the language of the letter will be taken on 2/25/25.
- HB 1469: The work group initially entertained the idea of supporting this legislation. However, the work group was concerned about the impact of these new taxes on low income individuals who are typically hit hardest by taxes of this kind and other cost increases. The work group ultimately decided to take no position on this legislation but to continue to monitor it.

Next Meeting: February 25, 2025, 9:00 – 9:30 am