



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

August 27, 2012

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your interest in the Maryland Health Improvement and Disparities Reduction Act of 2012 and for submitting comments regarding the Health Enterprise Zones (HEZ) Initiative. Your perspective and feedback are appreciated.

Earlier this summer, DHMH and the CHRC distributed the following drafts for public comment on the HEZ website, <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/healthenterprisezones>:

- Threshold criteria for HEZ applicants;
- Additional benefits that could be provided by the state to assist HEZ awardees; and
- Principles that will be used to review HEZ applications.

More than 150 public comments were received, which led to a range of changes in the proposals. The report submitted earlier this week to the Maryland General Assembly summarizes our responses to the comments received. The report also provides general information about our implementation plan, and is accessible on the HEZ website, <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/healthenterprisezones/SitePages/Updates.aspx>.

Following legislative review, DHMH and the CHRC plan to release the HEZ Call for Proposals later this fall. The Call for Proposals will be based on the threshold eligibility criteria and review principles distributed for public comment earlier and summarized in the report submitted to the legislature. The CHRC will receive and evaluate the HEZ proposals and issue recommendations to the DHMH Secretary, who will make final HEZ designations. It is expected that HEZ designations will be made by the Secretary in December, and it is anticipated that approximately two to four HEZs will be selected, depending on the number of applications and their scale.

We sincerely appreciate your submitting comments regarding the implementation of the Health Enterprise Zones Initiative. For additional information, please visit the HEZ website or submit questions or comments via email, [dhmh.hez@maryland.gov](mailto:dhmh.hez@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.  
Secretary

Carlessia A. Hussein  
Director, Office of Minority Health  
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