



Senate Bill 210

*Emergency Medical Services - Paramedics -
Immunization Administration - Effective Date*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 24, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally and Kristina Curley

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 210, as it extends a critical initiative for local health departments to carry out targeted public health initiatives by authorizing paramedics to administer specified vaccines with proper training and oversight.

Local health departments play a vital role in providing immunization services, counseling, and controlling cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, through collaborative efforts with state and local medical professionals, county governments, and other stakeholders, local health departments ensure effective immunization practices, disease surveillance and reporting, education and outreach, and program oversight.

SB 210 extends by five years the sunset on Chapter 404 of 2022, which authorizes a paramedic to administer influenza and COVID-19 immunizations as part of population health outreach efforts conducted by local health departments, hospitals, or health systems in the state. This authorization was initially set to terminate January 1, 2023, but was extended to January 1, 2025, in the 2022 session.

Under the law that SB 210 seeks to extend, vaccinations must be (1) provided under the direction of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operational program, ambulance service medical director, or other qualified physician, and authorized by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), and (2) provided in accordance with a written agreement between the paramedic's EMS operational program or commercial EMS service and the appropriate local health department, hospital, or health system.

MACo advocates that public health and emergency agencies be properly supported with necessary funds to support staff, services, supplies, and technology – not only in times of crisis – but for the everyday preventative and responsive health services they provide.

SB 210 would advance local efforts to improve vaccination rates, providing one of the most successful and cost-effective services to prevent disease and death. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 210 a **FAVORABLE** report.