

Draft Benefits for Health Enterprise Zones

Background

The Health Enterprise Zones legislation included a list of benefits and incentives that could be adopted or utilized by applicants as part of the proposal. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Community Health Resources Commission are aware that there may be other benefits that the State can provide, not specifically included in the legislation that may be useful for applicants to utilize in their proposal.

The Department and the Commission are seeking comment on what additional benefits would be helpful in implementing Health Enterprise Zones (HEZs).

Benefits Included in Senate Bill 234

HEZs are eligible to receive benefits to address health disparities as approved in the HEZ plan, including funding for innovative public health strategies and other incentives or mechanisms to address health disparities and improve access to care.

Practitioners that provide primary care, behavioral health services, or dental services in an approved HEZ are eligible for:

- Tax credits against the State income tax, in accordance with the approved HEZ plan;
- Loan repayment assistance, in accordance with the approved HEZ plan;
- Priority to enter the state's Patient Centered Medical Home Program, if the practitioner meets the standards developed by the Maryland Health Care Commission for entry into the Program;
- Priority for the receipt of any State funding available for electronic health records, if feasible and if other standards for receipt of the funding are met;
- Additional grant funding from the Community Health Resources Commission;
- Grants to defray the costs of capital or leasehold improvements for the purposes of improving or expanding the delivery of healthcare in the HEZ; and
- Grants to defray the costs of medical or dental equipment to be used in the HEZ, not to exceed the lesser of \$25,000 or 50% of the cost of the equipment.

Questions for Public Input

Public comment will be accepted on the following questions from June 15 to July 20. All public comments and responses to these questions should be sent to hez@dhmh.state.md.us.

1. What other types of benefits could the state provide in a Health Enterprise Zone?

2. What specific existing programs, i.e. public health grant programs, might be prioritized for applicants in a Health Enterprise Zones?

In answering these questions, please consider that the additional benefits will have to support the mission of the Health Enterprise Zones; be feasible to implement; be able to be achieved within existing resources; operate within existing programmatic rules; and not require statutory changes.

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