

Annotated Code of Maryland
(1978 Replacement Volume and 1979 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article 41 - Governor - Executive and
Administrative Departments
Section 486(b)(17)
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Preamble

The General Assembly finds that there is a need for expanded school health services in this State. In order to demonstrate this need, a 2-year school health pilot program has been established in two areas of this State, one urban and the other rural. The two targeted school-age groups are similar in their need for health services, although the reasons that they are currently underserved are different.

The urban area is Baltimore City. The Baltimore City Public School System, 6th largest in the United States, serves approximately 159,000 students in 207 schools. School health services are administered by the Baltimore City Health Department in cooperation with the Baltimore City Department of Education. The services provided to the schools by the Baltimore City Health Department consist of vision and hearing screening, immunization, and limited community health nursing and physician services. Over the past few years, the overall number of Community Health Nurses has declined, with a concurrent decrease in the number of nurses available for school health services.

The school health resources of the Baltimore City Health Department are currently directed to the elementary grades, with an emphasis on early identification of school health problems, and management of the multihandicapped child in the school setting.

The health needs of the adolescent school-age population are not being met with the present School Health Program. Such problems as teenage pregnancy, teenage alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness are not being adequately addressed by the School Health Program. In addition, it has been shown that adolescents do not utilize existing health services effectively. Demographic data for the selected area in Baltimore City shows that this area has higher rates for infant death, neonatal death, births to unwed mothers under 17, and premature births when compared with citywide data.

The Department of Health and Welfare has designated the rural area selected, Caroline County, as a Critical Health Manpower Shortage Area. There are presently no pediatricians within the county. Efforts to recruit