Guiding Principles for Healthy Rural Communities

The workgroup recognizes that health care systems of the future need to accommodate a culturally diverse population, as well as a growing number of vulnerable residents and elders with chronic health conditions. Recognizing and addressing the social determinants of health is crucial in promoting a healthy society. Stakeholders must support an integrated care delivery system that promotes health equity, quality, and comprehensive services across a continuum of care.

For these reasons our guiding principles are:

- The health and well-being of Mid-Shore and other rural residents is essential to the State and region's economic viability and quality of life.
- We are committed to building a health care system in which all residents regardless of their place of the jurisdiction have access to appropriate and high quality care.
- We are committed to creating opportunities to achieve payment and delivery system reforms that ensure access to high quality health services (including primary health care, inpatient and emergency medical services, behavioral health, oral health, and public health) to Mid-Shore and rural residents and visitors, including vulnerable populations.
- We are committed to leveraging existing payment innovations already underway in Maryland.
- We recognize that delivery model innovations need to be sustainable so that practitioners and payers invest in the necessary capabilities to be successful, but need to be flexible enough to take root and improve in urban, suburban, and rural environments.
- We are committed to empowering Mid-Shore and rural residents to be active participants in their health decisions, increasing health literacy in these communities, and providing transparency about the real costs of health care.
- We understand that the health care system is a vital component of the region's economy and an anchor point for economic development.
- We support investing in cost-effective prevention and wellness interventions, such as smoking cessation and reducing obesity, to improve health status.