The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair
House Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 978

February 27, 2015

Dear Delegate Hammen,

As co-founders of the Institute of Human Virology (IHV) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, we are writing this letter in support of Maryland House Bill 978, submitted by Delegates Lam, Hill, Jalisi and Morhaim.

The changes to the law proposed by this bill are in line with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) 2006 Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women in Health-Care Settings.

The main purposes of the recommendations set forth by CDC in 2006 were to increase testing for HIV to identify undiagnosed infection and normalize HIV testing to promote de-stigmatization of HIV testing.

Currently, it is estimated that 15-18% of Marylanders who are HIV positive do not know their status. Early diagnosis and linkage to care is associated with increased survival in persons living with HIV. Subsequent treatment for HIV through life-saving antiretroviral therapy has an impact on the health of the individual and on the community through secondary prevention.

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore, IHV created institutional policies to build on current testing opportunities and promote increased routine HIV testing. Since 2013, more than 5000 patients have been tested and 30 patients have been newly diagnosed with HIV.

However, the scope is limited, especially in our outpatient settings. Current law includes additional steps that make routine HIV testing challenging to implement in practice.
In order to fully realize the benefits of the latest scientific progress in HIV treatment and to maximize the health of Marylanders, we strongly support legislation that supports full implementation of the CDC’s 2006 recommendations.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Gallo, MD  
The Homer & Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor in Medicine  
Director, Institute of Human Virology at the  
University of Maryland School of Medicine  
Co-Founder & Scientific Director, Global Virus Network

Robert R. Redfield, MD  
Associate Director and Director of the  
Division of Clinical Care and Research  
Institute of Human Virology at the  
University of Maryland School of Medicine

William A. Blattner, MD  
Associate Director and Director of the  
Division of Epidemiology and Prevention  
Institute of Human Virology at the  
University of Maryland School of Medicine