

Prevention Workgroup Recommendation Source & Discussion Companion (Feb–April 2026)
(RANKING AND RECOMMENDATION SHEET IS BELOW THIS RESOURCE STARTING ON P.5)

February 9 – Environmental Conditions (Air & Water)

1. Income-Based Water Affordability

- **Recommendation:** Implement income-based water rate structures to reduce shutoffs and affordability barriers
- **Source:** Gabrielle Sanchez, Clean Water Action
- **Rationale:** Water costs and shutoffs create instability that compounds other stressors (housing, food, utilities)
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Recognition that affordability is inconsistent statewide
 - Emphasis that water access is not treated as a core need in policy

2. Routine Water Testing in Schools

- **Recommendation:** Expand routine testing for contaminants in schools and childcare settings
- **Source:** Gabrielle Sanchez, Clean Water Action
- **Rationale:** Inconsistent testing exposes children to health risks that affect development and school engagement
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Concern about uneven district practices
 - Reliance on temporary fixes like bottled water

3. Water as a Public Health Issue

- **Recommendation:** Treat water insecurity similarly to food insecurity in policy and planning
- **Source:** Gabrielle Sanchez, Clean Water Action
- **Rationale:** Water access affects health, hydration, dental outcomes, and household stress
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Donna Christy connected lack of fluoridated water to dental health and downstream system involvement

4. Targeted Environmental Intervention

- **Recommendation:** Use tools like MD Enviral Screen to identify and prioritize high-burden communities
- **Source:** Aneca Atkinson, Maryland Department of the Environment
- **Rationale:** Environmental harms are geographically concentrated and require targeted response
- Commissioner Discussion:

- Alignment around using data to guide prevention strategy

5. Lead Exposure Mitigation

- **Recommendation:** Accelerate lead pipe removal and environmental mitigation in high-risk communities
- **Source:** Aneca Atkinson, MDE
- **Rationale:** Lead exposure impacts cognitive development and behavior, with long-term implications
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Recognition of connection between environmental exposure and behavioral outcomes

March 9 – Sleep, Rest, and Clothing

6. Expand Food and Housing Supports

- **Recommendation:** Expand access to food and housing as foundational prevention strategies
- **Source:** Liz Park (Greenbelt CARES); supported by Kenyn Benjamin (211 Maryland)
- **Rationale:** Basic needs instability drives sleep disruption, stress, and system involvement risk
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Strong agreement that these are upstream drivers, not secondary issues

7. Strengthen SNAP Benefits

- **Recommendation:** Reinstate or strengthen SNAP benefits
- **Source:** Liz Park, Greenbelt CARES
- **Rationale:** SNAP reductions increase household instability and unmet basic needs
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Framed as one of the most immediate and actionable policy levers

8. Early Pediatric Screening (General)

- **Recommendation:** Implement routine early screening in pediatric settings, beginning in early childhood
- **Source:** Karen Duffy, Maryland Coalition of Families
- **Rationale:** Early identification prevents escalation into behavioral health and justice system involvement
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Agreement that systems are intervening too late

9. Screening for Sleep and Screen Time

- **Recommendation:** Screen for sleep disruption and screen time impacts
- **Source:** Michelle Kaufman, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Rationale:** Sleep disruption affects brain development, impulse control, and school functioning

- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Discussion of structural causes such as school schedules and technology use

10. Pediatric Referral Systems

- **Recommendation:** Build systems where pediatric providers screen and connect families to services
- **Source:** Karen Duffy; supported by Michelle Kaufman
- **Rationale:** Pediatric settings are early touchpoints but are disconnected from broader service systems
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Recognition of fragmentation across health and social services

11. Human Services Data Integration

- **Recommendation:** Aggregate and use human services data to understand cumulative need
- **Source:** Kenyn Benjamin, 211 Maryland
- **Rationale:** Families present with multiple overlapping needs that are not captured in siloed systems
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Noted increase in complexity of family needs over time

Key Tension Raised in This Meeting

- When do issues like sleep and clothing shift from **family responsibility to system responsibility?**
- Strong acknowledgment that these needs are often **signals of deeper system failure**

April 13 – Reproductive Health Access

12. Expand School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)

- **Recommendation:** Expand SBHCs, particularly in underserved areas
- **Source:** Tresa Wiggins, Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care
- **Rationale:** SBHCs reduce access barriers and provide comprehensive care on-site
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Noted that several counties still lack access

13. Sustainable Funding for SBHCs

- **Recommendation:** Increase Medicaid reimbursement and funding stability
- **Source:** Tresa Wiggins
- **Rationale:** Current funding limits expansion and long-term sustainability
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Sustainability identified as primary barrier

14. Confidentiality Protections (EOB Issue)

- **Recommendation:** Address Explanation of Benefits (EOB) confidentiality barriers
- **Source:** Tresa Wiggins; supported by Samantha Ritter (MDH)
- **Rationale:** Youth avoid care when confidentiality is not protected
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Recognized as a major barrier despite availability of services

15. Expand Title X Utilization

- **Recommendation:** Increase awareness and access to Title X clinics
- **Source:** Samantha Ritter, Maryland Department of Health
- **Rationale:** Clinics exist but are underutilized, especially post-pandemic
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Noted uneven usage and engagement challenges

16. Continuity of Care for Returning Youth

- **Recommendation:** Establish systems to ensure continuity of care after detention
- **Source:** Raised by Aubrey Edwards-Luce; addressed by Tresa Wiggins and Samantha Ritter
- **Rationale:** No system currently exists to notify providers when youth return
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Identified as a major systems gap

17. Community Health Workers for Reentry Support

- **Recommendation:** Use CHWs to support care coordination and reentry
- **Source:** Samantha Ritter, MDH
- **Rationale:** CHWs can bridge gaps across disconnected systems and are Medicaid-reimbursable
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Seen as a practical, implementable solution

18. Youth Engagement Infrastructure

- **Recommendation:** Invest in youth advisory councils and peer health educators
- **Source:** Samantha Ritter; group discussion
- **Rationale:** Youth-driven approaches improve trust, access, and relevance
- Commissioner Discussion:
 - Noted variability across counties and programs

Prevention Workgroup – Recommendation Voting and Ranking Worksheet

Scope: Foundational Needs (Environment, Sleep, Clothing, Reproductive Health)

Timeframe: February – April 2026 Presenter Sessions

Transparency Note

This worksheet includes two categories of recommendations:

1. **Recommendations where a speaker explicitly articulated a pathway to reform** (legislative, funding, administrative, or coordination-based), and
2. **A separate section listing recommendations discussed as needs, gaps, or aspirations** without a clearly defined mechanism.

Instructions for Members

For each recommendation, please indicate:

- **Support:** Yes / No / Needs Revision
- **Priority:** High / Medium / Low
- **Ranking:** Rank your top 5 recommendations overall (1 = highest priority)
- **Comments:** Optional edits, conditions, or implementation considerations

Section A. Recommendations With Explicitly Stated Pathways to Reform

ID	Recommendation	Source (Speaker & Meeting)	Explicit Pathway to Reform (as stated)	Mechanism Type	Support	Priority (H/M/L)	Rank	Comments
P1	Implement income-based water rate structures to reduce water insecurity	Gabrielle Sanchez, Clean Water Action – Feb 9, 2026	Adjust utility pricing structures to align water costs with household income and reduce shutoffs	Regulatory reform; Utility policy; Equity-based pricing				

2	Expand routine water testing in schools and childcare settings	Gabrielle Sanchez – Feb 9, 2026	Increase frequency and scope of testing for contaminants and ensure compliance with safety standards	Administrative action; Public health regulation				
P3	Incorporate water insecurity into public health and education planning	Gabrielle Sanchez – Feb 9, 2026	Treat water insecurity like food insecurity in statewide planning and interventions	Cross-system policy alignment				
P4	Use environmental justice screening tools to target prevention investments	Aneca Atkinson, MDE – Feb 9, 2026	Deploy MD EnviroScreen tool to identify high-burden communities and guide resource allocation	Data-driven targeting; Interagency coordination				
P5	Expand food and housing resources as upstream prevention supports	Liz Park, Greenbelt CARES – March 9, 2026	Increase access to basic needs supports to stabilize families before crisis	Program funding; Basic needs infrastructure				

P6	Reinstate enhanced SNAP benefits to stabilize family resources	Panel consensus – March 9, 2026	Restore higher benefit levels to reduce household stress and instability	Federal/state funding policy				
P7	Implement early screening for sleep, behavioral, and family stress indicators in pediatric care	Karen Duffy; Michelle Kaufman – March 9, 2026	Introduce routine screening in pediatric visits and connect families to services earlier	Healthcare integration; Early intervention system				
P8	Screen adolescents specifically for sleep disruption and screen-time impacts	Michelle Kaufman – March 9, 2026	Integrate screening protocols into pediatric and adolescent care models	Clinical practice change				
P9	Build a statewide system to aggregate human services data similar to healthcare systems	Kenyn Benjamin, 211 Maryland – March 9, 2026	Aggregate service-use data to inform providers and policy decisions	Data infrastructure; Systems integration				
P10	Expand school-based health centers (SBHCs) to underserved jurisdictions	Tresa Wiggins / MASBH C – April 13, 2026	Target funding and expansion to counties without	Program expansion; Targeted funding				

			SBHC coverage					
P11	Improve Medicaid and insurance reimbursement structures for SBHC sustainability	MASBH C presentation – April 13, 2026	Adjust reimbursement rates and expand billing authority to sustain operations	Funding reform; Insurance policy				
P12	Improve data sharing between SBHCs and statewide health systems (CRISP)	MASBH C presentation – April 13, 2026	Require reporting of screenings and health data to improve care coordination	Data integration; Health system coordination				
P13	Expand access to reproductive health services through school-based care models	April 13 panel (Wiggins ; Ritter)	Use SBHCs and public health systems to deliver confidential, accessible care to youth	Service delivery expansion; Systems coordination				