



House Bill 1329 – Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Establishment of Small Business Health Insurance Subsidies Program

Position: Support

The Maryland REALTORS® support HB 1329 which will help expand the use of the Small Business Health Options (SHOP) Exchange.

The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) reports that nearly 14% of REALTORS® nationwide are not covered by health insurance. Although the Maryland REALTORS® do not have specific state data on this, we believe that the percentage of uninsured in our state association is similar. That is over twice the rate of the overall uninsured population in Maryland.

The NAR study also showed that health exchanges were the third most common source of health insurance for REALTORS® (12%). The other more common sources of health coverage were a spouse's health plan (28%) and medicare (22%). About 10% were covered by private policies.

Although most REALTORS® are independent contractors who can only qualify for plans offered to individuals, many brokers employ administrative people that do not sell but provide administrative services to the company. Because many of these brokerages are smaller, they could qualify for SHOP plans which provide medical insurance of the administrative support staff. The REALTORS® believe HB 1329 will make joining a SHOP plan more likely by creating the subsidy program. For these reasons, the Maryland REALTORS® recommend a favorable report.

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