



Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee —

My name is Carlos Orbe. I am the Public Affairs Specialist for Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), an association housed at MD Nonprofits of over 300 Latino community leaders, business owners, and Latino-led nonprofits. MLU's mission is to unify efforts across the state to advocate and organize for the benefit of Maryland's Latino community. Our vision is that the Latino community in Maryland thrives, achieves excellence, innovates, and continually makes progress economically, socially, and environmentally. We utilize data-driven and evidence-based approaches to build coalitions to advocate and create a space for every Latino to have a voice. In doing so, we look to create or advocate for a network of resources to support Latino-initiatives that positively impact the community overall. For these reasons, I am writing to express my support for the requirement of Maryland Health Programming to expand and develop healthcare coverage to undocumented immigrants.

Established in 2020, MLU has established a seat at the table among non-profit organizations within Maryland's Latino community. From its inception and as a civil right, MLU's members have embraced healthcare measures across the state as a principle. HB363 will require the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and the Maryland Department of Health to develop a report comparing options for offering affordable health care coverage to State residents who are ineligible for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, the Maryland Children's Health Program, or qualified health plans due to the individuals' immigration status. Additionally, this bill is requiring the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly by October 31, 2023. On behalf of MLU, we are asking for the report to include a comparison of the cost to the State, the impact on the uninsured, potential benefits designs, and implementation considerations for:

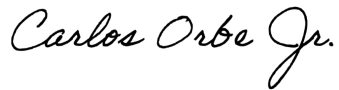
- offering coverage through (1) Medicaid and MCHP for individuals who are technically and financially eligible for those programs but for their immigration status and (2) QHPs to individuals technically and financially eligible to purchase coverage through MHBE but for their immigration status; and
- offering coverage to (1) all eligible individuals; (2) only individuals age 21 and younger; (3) only individuals who are at least age 65; and (4) only low-income individuals.

Other parts of the country have begun engaging successful healthcare programming MD should aspire to emulate. On December 9, 2022, the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services and the U.S. Department of the Treasury approved Washington's application for a State Innovation Waiver to expand access to QHPs, stand-alone qualified dental plans, and a state affordability program (Cascade Care Savings) to Washington residents regardless of immigration status. The waiver is effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2028. California previously submitted a waiver application that would have permitted undocumented immigrants to purchase coverage through the state exchange without subsidies, but the application was withdrawn. California's Medicaid program now covers income-eligible individuals of all ages, regardless of immigration status.

Maryland Latinos Unidos stands with our undocumented brothers and sisters in Maryland. We are seeking Health Care Coverage for them as residents of the state through the Health Benefit Exchange and the Maryland Department of Health. Therefore, we ask the committee to give HB473 a favorable report.

Respectfully,
Carlos Orbe, Jr.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carlos Orbe Jr.".