



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 363

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health -
Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants – Report
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 16, 2023

Submitted by Kali Schumitz and Mark Huffman, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Energy Advocates
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Job Opportunities Task Force
Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
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Loyola University Maryland
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Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Food Bank
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 363, which would provide more information about ways to address the most significant uninsured population in the state.

MAP promotes comprehensive, high-quality, culturally competent and fully-integrated health care that is available and accessible for all Marylanders, especially those living in or near poverty. Ensuring equitable health care is critical in eliminating disparities in health outcomes experienced by communities of color, women, LGBTQ people, immigrant communities and other underserved populations. HB 363 is an important next step on Maryland's our journey towards creating a resilient healthcare system for all, especially communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by lack of health care.

In 2022 this committee took a bold step in ensuring that Marylanders have access to care during pregnancy and for their newborn babies. The Healthy Babies Equity Act expands Medicaid to pregnant individuals who meet the normal requirements of the program regardless of immigration status. We know this will have an immediate positive impact on our communities.

HB363 seeks to gather information to help us better serve our uninsured residents by comparing options for offering affordable healthcare coverage to State residents who are ineligible for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, the Maryland Children's Health Program, or qualified health plans through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange due to the individual's immigration status.

While the extension of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has enabled more Marylanders to get the medical attention they need, hundreds of thousands of residents are without health insurance. The undocumented population, in particular, is at much greater risk of being uninsured. According to the Census Bureau, 21.3% of Latino Marylanders were uninsured in 2021, compared to 5.6% of Black and 3% of White residents. The disproportionate numbers are likely an indication of the large share of immigrants in the Latino community: non-citizen immigrants accounted for 38% of the uninsured in Maryland despite accounting for only 7.2% of the state population.

Gaining health coverage greatly improves access to health care and decreases the negative effects of being uninsured. HB 363 is a common-sense next step to identify options for ensuring all Marylanders have access to the health care they need.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 363.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.