



***Mission:*** To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy ***Vision:*** Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 107  
Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Small Employers – Special Enrollment  
Period and Marketing  
Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee  
By: Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)  
February 16, 2023**

Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 107. This bill would invest \$5 million/year into a five-year outreach program to help small employers and their employees get connected with health coverage. This outreach would include education and training regarding existing coverage options, including enrolling in coverage through Maryland Health Connection, the state’s online insurance marketplace, as well as options for employer-sponsored plans both on- and off- exchange. Such a marketing and outreach program would both help to reduce the overall uninsured rate in the state and support Maryland’s small employers by ensuring that their employees have the coverage they need to remain healthy and productive. In addition to helping employees stay healthy, health coverage also helps make employment opportunities more attractive to job seekers which is important in the current economic climate. Small businesses are more likely than large businesses to be owned by people of color and Maryland has the highest rate per-capita of businesses owned by people of color in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Providing better opportunities for small businesses and nonprofits to help their employees connect with health coverage will improve health equity. We urge a favorable report for HB 107.

*The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.*

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<sup>1</sup> Mirabella, L. The Baltimore Sun. “Maryland ranks No. 1 in U.S. for Minority and women businesses ownership, study finds.” April 18, 2018. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-bz-minority-owned-business-maryland-20180418-story.html>