



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0333
HOSPITALS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – MEDICAL BILL REIMBURSEMENT
PROCESS**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Charkoudian

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0333 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

The passage of the Medical Bill Reimbursement Act in the 2022 General Assembly session was an important step to ensure that those residents who qualify for free care were not overcharged by hospitals. Our members strongly supported that bill. Medical debt is one of the major causes of low-income residents being forced out of their homes and having to declare bankruptcy.

This bill follows the requirement that hospitals reimburse those patients who qualify for free care with specifics on how the process should work. The process requires multiple agencies to work in concert with the hospitals to determine if the patient's income was 200% below the poverty limit, or if they participated in any of the programs that support low-income residents, such as SNAP or Energy Assistance. If they do qualify, the hospital is required to provide a refund to them, unless it is for a single \$25 charge. We think the sharing of information is a good way to provide the hospital with the tools it needs to make this kind of determination.

We support the bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.