



END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

Testimony to the House Health & Government Operations Committee
HB328 Hospitals-Financial Assistance Policies-Revisions
Position: Favorable

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Health & Government Operations Committee
Room 241, HOB
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Health & Government Operations Committee

Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

End Medical Debt Maryland is a coalition of consumer protection, labor, faith-based, civil rights, health, and patient advocates that have united together to end medical debt in Maryland. Our coalition is comprised of more than 60 organizations as well as individuals who have been impacted by medical debt-together we represent more than 400,000 Marylanders working to end the devastating impact of medical debt on families across the state.

We are here in strong support of HB328.

HB328 expands the number of patients receiving free and low-cost hospital care by ending arbitrary asset and geographic tests used by 27 hospitals to bar patients who were eligible for low-cost care.

Everyone who qualifies for free or reduced cost care should receive it with no exceptions. Providing free care is a condition that Maryland hospitals must meet to receive the millions of dollars in tax-exemptions each year. They also are compensated for this care through our global budgeting process.

HB328 will expand free and affordable care to income-eligible patients throughout Maryland, and in so doing, reduce medical debt, and increase financial security.

For all these reasons, we support HB328 and urge a favorable report.