



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: March 13, 2025

RE: HB1489 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Coverage
for the Treatment of Obesity

The MLLC supports HB1489 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1489.

The following bill requires the state Medicaid program to cover the full range of obesity treatment options, including pharmacotherapy. This also includes coverage for intensive behavioral therapy, bariatric surgery, and FDA-approved anti-obesity medication. Coverage under this section must be neither separate or different from coverage for any other illness, condition, or disorder for purposes of determining deductibles, lifetime dollar limits, copayment and coinsurance factors, and benefit year maximum for deductibles and copayment and coinsurance factors. All appropriateness and medical necessity determinations must be made in the same manner as those determinations made for the treatment of any other illness, condition, or disorder covered by the state Medicaid plan.

As the Latino community faces higher rates of obesity and related disparities, this piece of legislation will directly benefit and impact this community. 37.8% of Latino Marylanders are considered obese compared to 31.5% of White Marylanders.¹ Obesity heightens the risks of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and different types of cancer.² If all states were to expand Medicaid coverage for obesity drugs, almost 40% of adults and 26% of children with obesity would gain access to these drugs.³ In the long term, expanding Medicaid coverage for these drugs will decrease Medicaid spending on chronic diseases associated with obesity.⁴

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1489.

¹ [Obesity in Maryland](#)

² Ibid

³ [Medicaid Coverage of and Spending on GLP-1s](#)

⁴ Ibid