

# HOUSE BILL 619

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By: **Delegates Ruth, Allen, Bagnall, Charkoudian, Ebersole, Fair, Feldmark, Guyton, Guzzone, Hill, Lehman, R. Lewis, Lopez, McCaskill, Phillips, Simpson, Smith, Taveras, Terrasa, Young, and Ziegler**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2024

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Health – Commission on Universal Health Care**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission on Universal Health Care to determine  
4 the feasibility of establishing a State universal health care program to provide health  
5 benefits to all residents of the State through a single-payer system; and generally  
6 relating to the Commission on Universal Health Care.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – Health – General

9 Section 13–5201 through 13–5203 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 52.  
10 Commission on Universal Health Care”

11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2023 Replacement Volume)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Health – General**

16 **SUBTITLE 52. COMMISSION ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE.**

17 **13–5201.**

18 **IN THIS SUBTITLE, “COMMISSION” MEANS THE COMMISSION ON UNIVERSAL**  
19 **HEALTH CARE.**

20 **13–5202.**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1           **(A) THERE IS A COMMISSION ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE.**

2           **(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION IS TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY**  
3 **OF ESTABLISHING A STATE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE**  
4 **HEALTH BENEFITS TO ALL RESIDENTS OF THE STATE THROUGH A SINGLE-PAYER**  
5 **SYSTEM.**

6           **(C) THE COMMISSION CONSISTS OF:**

7                   **(1) THREE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED BY**  
8 **THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

9                   **(2) THREE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY**  
10 **THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;**

11                   **(3) THE SECRETARY, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

12                   **(4) THE SECRETARY OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT, OR THE**  
13 **SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

14                   **(5) THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, OR THE SECRETARY'S**  
15 **DESIGNEE;**

16                   **(6) THE SECRETARY OF LABOR, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

17                   **(7) THE SPECIAL SECRETARY OF SMALL, MINORITY, AND WOMEN**  
18 **BUSINESS AFFAIRS, OR THE SPECIAL SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

19                   **(8) THE COMMISSIONER OF THE MARYLAND INSURANCE**  
20 **ADMINISTRATION, OR THE COMMISSIONER'S DESIGNEE;**

21                   **(9) TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF PUBLIC SECTOR LABOR UNIONS,**  
22 **DESIGNATED BY THE MARYLAND STATE AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AFL-CIO;**

23                   **(10) TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE SECTOR LABOR UNIONS,**  
24 **DESIGNATED BY THE MARYLAND STATE AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AFL-CIO;**  
25 **AND**

26                   **(11) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:**

27                   **(I) THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MARYLAND**  
28 **ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, REPRESENTING THE GEOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION**  
29 **DENSITY DIVERSITY OF THE STATE;**

1                   (II) THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL  
2 LEAGUE, REPRESENTING THE GEOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION DENSITY DIVERSITY  
3 OF THE STATE;

4                   (III) THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY,  
5 AT LEAST ONE OF WHOM REPRESENTS SMALL BUSINESS;

6                   (IV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF MEDCHI;

7                   (V) ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE MARYLAND HOSPITAL  
8 ASSOCIATION;

9                   (VI) ONE LICENSED NURSE WHO PRACTICES IN THE STATE;

10                  (VII) ONE LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER WHO PRACTICES IN THE  
11 STATE;

12                  (VIII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A NONGOVERNMENTAL  
13 ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES HEALTH CARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO  
14 INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN THE STATE;

15                  (IX) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A NONGOVERNMENTAL  
16 ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES HEALTH CARE TO OR ASSISTS WITH OBTAINING  
17 HEALTH CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE UNINSURED, UNDERINSURED, OR  
18 UNABLE TO OBTAIN INSURANCE;

19                  (X) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A NONGOVERNMENTAL  
20 ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS WITH FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; AND

21                  (XI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN ORGANIZATION THAT  
22 ASSISTS IMMIGRANTS.

23                  (D) THE GOVERNOR, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
24 SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, SHALL DESIGNATE A CHAIR OF THE  
25 COMMISSION.

26                  (E) TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS TO THE  
27 COMMISSION, THE GOVERNOR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, AND THE  
28 SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE SHALL ENSURE REGIONAL, ECONOMIC, ETHNIC, AND  
29 GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.

30                  (F) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION:

1           (1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE  
2 COMMISSION; BUT

3           (2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES UNDER THE  
4 STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

5           (G) THE DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES  
6 JOINTLY SHALL PROVIDE STAFF TO SUPPORT THE COMMISSION.

7 13-5203.

8           (A) THE COMMISSION SHALL STUDY HOW THE STATE MAY:

9           (1) PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, AFFORDABLE, AND HIGH-QUALITY  
10 PUBLICLY FINANCED HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE STATE  
11 IN A SEAMLESS AND EQUITABLE MANNER, REGARDLESS OF INCOME, ASSETS,  
12 HEALTH STATUS, CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS, OR AVAILABILITY OF  
13 OTHER HEALTH CARE COVERAGE; AND

14           (2) INCLUDE A BENEFIT PACKAGE COVERING PRIMARY CARE,  
15 PREVENTIVE CARE, CHRONIC CARE, ACUTE EPISODIC CARE, MENTAL HEALTH CARE,  
16 REPRODUCTIVE CARE, INCLUDING PREGNANCY, BIRTH CONTROL, AND ABORTION  
17 SERVICES, AND HOSPITAL SERVICES.

18           (B) THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER HOW TO:

19           (1) INCORPORATE HEALTH CARE EQUITY;

20           (2) REDUCE HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES; AND

21           (3) INCREASE HEALTH CARE ACCESS, PARTICULARLY IN URBAN AND  
22 RURAL SETTINGS WITH LIMITED ACCESS.

23           (C) THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER PLANS, ANALYSES, PROGRAMS,  
24 AND LEGISLATION IN OTHER STATES.

25           (D) THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON  
26 HOW TO CONTAIN COSTS BY:

27           (1) PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO RESIDENTS TO AVOID PREVENTABLE  
28 HEALTH CONDITIONS AND UNNECESSARY EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS AND PROMOTE  
29 PERSONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH;

1           **(2) ESTABLISHING INNOVATIVE PAYMENT MECHANISMS TO HEALTH**  
2 **CARE PROVIDERS, SUCH AS GLOBAL PAYMENTS; AND**

3           **(3) REDUCING UNNECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES.**

4           **(E) THE COMMISSION SHALL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON:**

5           **(1) FULLY INTEGRATING OR ALIGNING THE MARYLAND MEDICAL**  
6 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, MEDICARE, PRIVATE INSURANCE, AND STATE, COUNTY,**  
7 **AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES INTO OR WITH A UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM;**

8           **(2) TRANSITIONING WORKERS DISPLACED BY CHANGES TO THE**  
9 **HEALTH CARE SYSTEM;**

10           **(3) CREATING AN OPERATING STRUCTURE FOR A UNIVERSAL HEALTH**  
11 **CARE PROGRAM; AND**

12           **(4) WHETHER A UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM COULD**  
13 **INCLUDE DENTAL, VISION, HEARING, AND LONG-TERM CARE BENEFITS.**

14           **(F) THE COMMISSION SHALL DEVELOP COST PROJECTIONS FOR THE**  
15 **HEALTH CARE PROGRAM AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AMOUNTS AND**  
16 **MECHANISMS NECESSARY TO FINANCE A UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM.**

17           **(G) (1) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2026, THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT**  
18 **AN INTERIM REPORT ON ITS ACTIVITIES TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE**  
19 **WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE SENATE FINANCE**  
20 **COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**  
21 **COMMITTEE.**

22           **(2) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2027, THE COMMISSION SHALL**  
23 **SUBMIT A FINAL REPORT WITH ITS ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE**  
24 **GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT**  
25 **ARTICLE, THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE HEALTH AND**  
26 **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE.**

27           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
28 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 4 years and 1 month and, at the end of June  
29 30, 2028, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be  
30 abrogated and of no further force and effect.