



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 875 – Hospitals - Financial Assistance Policies and Bill Collections

SPONSOR: Senator Feldman

HEARING DATE: March 5, 2020

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 875**, which increases the family income threshold for a hospital's financial assistance policy and free medically necessary care to patients between 200% and 500% of the federal poverty level. It requires a financial assistance policy include a payment plan and a mechanism for a patient to request reconsideration. Families receiving a specified financial assistance are presumptively eligible for care.

Students enrolled in free and reduced-price meal plans and their families would be presumptively eligible for hospital's financial assistance policy and free medically necessary care. For the 2018-2019 School year, 60.1% of Prince George's County students were eligible.

In 2018, 25,008 (7.9%) of Prince George's County households received SNAP benefits. Households receiving SNAP benefits had a lower median income (\$45,363) compared to all county households (\$83,034), were more likely have one or more member of households with a disability (40.2% vs. 21.0%). Thirty percent of SNAP-recipient households were below the poverty level in 2018, compared 7.3% of all county households.

In 2018, 72,038 (8.1%) Prince George's County residents lived below the poverty level. Sadly, those below the poverty level include some of our most vulnerable residents: 11.0% of our children and youth under 18 years and 7.5% of our seniors, those residents 65 years and older.

The Health Department supports efforts to improve access to and affordability of high-quality health services. Updating thresholds for financial assistance will allow many more Prince Georgians to receive the medically necessary care they need, when

they need it. In addition, this bill will keep financial assistance policies in line with cost of living increases in Maryland.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 875** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.