



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1420**  
**HOSPITALS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICIES AND BILL COLLECTIONS**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate R. Lewis

**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 HB1420 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.

Prices for health care, and especially hospital costs are unbelievably high. While the General Assembly is credited for passing legislation to provide free and reduced-cost care for low income patients who lack health coverage, our members believe it is time to revisit. Too many times hospitals will charge low income patients for services that should have been free or at a much lower cost. These kinds of costs will force people who are living at the edge of poverty into bankruptcy.

Much of this is due to the fact that hospitals have way too much leniency in determining the rates and who is eligible. This bill will make the process of documenting eligibility much easier, and provide better education to patients that such options are available. It will also increase the financial limit of who is eligible for free care to 300% of federal poverty guidelines and for those eligible for reduced cost care to 600% of federal poverty guidelines.

This bill, if enacted, will keep a lot of people out of debt and help them keep their jobs and homes. At the end of the day, that is the best outcome of any piece of legislation.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.