



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Finance Committee**  
on  
**Senate Bill 893**  
March 2, 2021  
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of expanding access to health care in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with congregations in three synods in every part of our State.

Our community has advocated for access to appropriate and adequate health care for all people in the United States and its territories since 2003. Expanding access by expanding entry points to the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange will further the General Assembly's diligent efforts to insure the uninsured.

**Senate Bill 893** would add an access point for Marylanders to enroll in healthcare coverage by permitting those filing for unemployment to be connected to the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. This is particularly important as the pandemic has imposed job loss on many.

Loss of employment can be accompanied with loss of employer-sponsored health insurance; or financially compromising clients out of their coverage. Everyone needs and should have affordable health insurance. We note with distress that people with disabilities, and African-American and Hispanic workers have been subject to greater job losses than others. Health disparities are widening because of the pandemic through no fault of workers.

**We also support Sen. Rosapepe's amendment** to provide a special enrollment period for those who qualify and get connected to the Health Benefit Exchange through unemployment filing. This will build on Maryland's healthcare success story.

We ask the Committee's favorable report to continue insuring the uninsured.

Thank you for this hearing.

Lee Hudson