

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE AND VICINITY



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB728

Access to Care Act
Senate Finance Committee

**Bishop Reginald Kennedy,
President Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity (MCBV)**

March 2, 2022

Dear Members of the Committee:

MCBV is submitting this testimony in support for SB728, Access to Care Act, which would open up the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (ACA Coverage) to all Marylanders who meet the regular ACA eligibility, regardless of immigration status. This bill would also create a subsidy program with the funds necessary to cover new enrollees.

The Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity is an organization comprised of more than 150 congregations whose focus is shifting more and more on caring for the "holistic" needs, in particular health care, for its members and the communities it serves. Our Civic Action Committee has an initiative, "And the Church Shall Lead", and one of its goals is to eradicate health disparities/inequalities.

We support this bill because too many Marylanders still do not have access to quality, affordable health care, contributing to dire health inequities. This bill would expand access to health care and produce better outcomes for the people we serve. We also believe that the Access to Care Act is a step toward ending healthcare disparities for immigrant communities in Maryland. It would ensure access to primary care, resulting in higher early detection rates and better long-term management of chronic diseases and serious illnesses. It would decrease the amount of costly emergency room visits and mortality rates. We urge you to support SB728.

Thank you in advance for all you do to get this important bill, SB728, passed.

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