



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 2, 2022

SB 728

Health Insurance - Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program (Access to Care Act)

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 728 alters the purpose of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund to include the provision of funding for the establishment and operation of the Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program; requiring the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to establish and implement the Program to provide State premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions to qualified residents; and providing that the implementation of the Program is contingent on approval of a certain waiver application.

In Maryland, over 275,000 undocumented immigrants are ineligible for care through the Maryland Health Exchange. Multiple states have established comprehensive care programs to extend coverage to immigrants regardless of their immigration status. This has had the highest impact on Black and Latino residents, who have become sicker, hospitalized at higher rates, and die younger as they are forced to face life or death situations due to their exclusion in programs such as the Affordable Care Act.

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.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 728.