

**Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore  
and Vicinity (BMNCBV)**

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1035**

Access to Care Act

House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Rev. Dr. Sandra Conner**

**President Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity (BMNCBV)**

**March 1, 2022**

Dear Members of the Committee:

The Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity is submitting this testimony in support for HB1035, Access to Care Act. Immigration status should no longer be a barrier for Marylanders to be able to enroll in qualified health plans at Maryland Health Connection. BMNCBV is an organization that strives to equip faith leaders with resources to do effective health ministries for its congregants, as well as themselves and their families, people that they serve. This bill would help everyone we serve, in particular, people of color.

In Maryland, over 275K 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. We urge you to support HB1035 and thank you in advance for your actions on this important bill.

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