



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 10, 2022

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 610 – Public Health – Commission on Universal Health Care

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 610. Broad based, affordable, and comprehensive health insurance is integral to hospitals' ability to deliver high-quality care. It also is key to the state's success under the Total Cost of Care Model (Model), which holds hospitals accountability for whole-person care, including population health.

Maryland hospitals have been strong proponents of the state's efforts to expand health care coverage, including Medicaid expansion, subsidized individual and small group health plans through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, and the individual market reinsurance program.

We appreciate the General Assembly's leadership and commitment to ensure Marylanders have coverage and access to health care and look forward to continuing to work together to achieve this shared goal.

As a country and state, we have made major progress toward achieving universal coverage. Approximately 1.3 million Marylanders are enrolled in public or private insurance.¹ In its second year, the Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program resulted in 3,000 individuals signing up for health coverage through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.² Last year, the General Assembly passed legislation allowing additional state-level subsidies for young adults purchasing coverage from the exchange beginning in 2022.³

Over the past several years, the Maryland Health Insurance Coverage Protection Commission led initiatives to expand coverage in the state. These initiatives, in which hospitals are active partners, would strengthen the insurance marketplace and explore additional ways to transform the health care coverage system in the state. Given this progress, large-scale disruption to the state's health care coverage and delivery systems could be detrimental to the ultimate goal of ensuring insurance coverage for all Marylanders.

¹ www.marylandhbe.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-MHBE-Annual-Report.pdf

² Ibid.

³ mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0729?ys=2021RS

Maryland hospitals know firsthand the importance of broad based, continuous coverage and how critical it is for the success of the Model. Under the Model, our hospitals have lowered health care spending, while improving quality of care.

These improvements were only realized because of the synergies between our unique care delivery model and the expansion of health coverage.

Therefore, as you consider legislation, we encourage you to evaluate its impact on the Total Cost of Care Model and the coverage initiatives already in place or set to begin in the state. Any significant disruption to the health care landscape, or additional costs for the health care system increase the risk that these initiatives will fail. We urge the state to be continuously mindful of its approach to maintain and increase access to health care coverage—the very foundation of our unique and respected health care delivery model.

For more information, please contact:
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