

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE AND VICINITY



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1035
ACCESS TO CARE ACT
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
BISHOP REGINALD KENNEDY, PRESIDENT
MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE & VICINITY (MCBV)
March 1, 2022**

Dear Members of the Committee:

We appreciate having this opportunity to submit testimony for a very important health bill, HB 1035, that **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 applicants.**

The Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity (MCBV) 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 people of the communities it serves.

We acknowledge that Maryland has some of the best health systems in the country; however, we believe there is still a need to make greater investments to improve access to health coverage and inequities. If HB1035 passes, it can reduce the number of undocumented immigrants who are ineligible for care through the Maryland Health Exchange, as well as improve the quality healthcare for all, in particular, Black and Latino residents, who are confronted with greater health challenges such as diabetes, and hypertension, that often lead to higher hospitalization rates, and more deathly situations due to their exclusion in programs such as the Affordable Care Act.

MCBV will make it one of our top priorities for the 2022 Maryland General Assembly session. We pray that our legislators will heed our call. We thank you in advance for your actions towards HB1035.

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