



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)
DATE: 03/08/2022
RE: HB0610 Public Health Commission on Universal Health Care

The MLLC supports HB0610 Public Health Commission on Universal Health Care

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0610.

While uninsured rates decreased throughout the state, Hispanics continue to have the highest uninsured rates of any racial or ethnic group within the state of Maryland. In 2019, The Kaiser Family Foundation reported the findings of The American Community Survey, which highlights that in Maryland 21.4 percent of Hispanics were uninsured, as compared to 3.8 percent for non-Hispanic whites.¹ This can be attributed in part to the systematic exclusions certain communities face from federal health insurance programs. Current programs are only open to U.S Citizens and immigrants with certain immigration status. Undocumented immigrants and DACA recipients are not eligible for state or federal healthcare subsidies. A plan to extend access to health care to all, including immigrants who are not eligible due to status, presents an opportunity to emerge from this crisis equitably and to better position all communities to face future public health emergencies.²

The bill requires the establishment of an Universal Health Care commission to develop a plan for the State to establish a single-payer universal health care program. It will require the health care program to be designed to provide comprehensive, affordable, and high-quality publicly financed health care coverage for all residents of the state in a seamless and equitable manner, regardless of income, assets, health status, citizenship or immigration status, or availability of other health care coverage.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0610.

1. Kaiser Family Foundation, Uninsured Rates for the Nonelderly by Race/Ethnicity, <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/state-indicator/nonelderly-uninsured-rate-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRaces=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22maryland%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>
2. Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Coverage and Care for Immigrants, (Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, December 2017), <https://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants>.