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BILL NO.: SB 601

TITLE: Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – State–Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program – Sunset Repeal

SPONSOR: Senator Feldman

COMMITTEE: Finance

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 1, 2023

Baltimore County strongly **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 601 – Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – State–Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program – Sunset Repeal. This legislation would repeal the termination date of the State-Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program.

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 represent the largest group of uninsured residents in the State. Many are forced to take jobs that offer no insurance benefits and struggle to find high quality, affordable healthcare. The COVID pandemic highlighted the critical need for each and every resident to be insured, as many were saddled with burdensome hospital costs and to this day struggle to pay their bills. In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program, a transformative program that offered annual subsidies to young adults at up to 400% of the federal poverty line to cover the cost of insurance. That program would sunset this year.

Senate Bill 601 would end the pilot program and establish the State-Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Program, making permanent the life-changing pilot program that for many has made healthcare affordable and accessible. The need for healthcare has not declined since this program was initially established; this legislation ensures that all residents in need continue to receive this vital assistance.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 601. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.