



# END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

## **Testimony on SB404/HB333**

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee;

To Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Brige Dumais and I'm a Co-Chair of the End Medical Debt Maryland coalition. We are a statewide coalition of nearly 70 organizations and volunteers. Our members are labor unions, faith leaders, patients, health justice advocates, consumer rights proponents, lawyers, healthcare workers, and community members impacted by medical debt. Collectively, we represent over 350,000 Marylanders. We support SB404/HB333 which will implement a process to reimburse hospital patients who were supposed to receive free healthcare but were wrongfully billed by a hospital.

### Background

Last year, the legislature passed HB694 in response to a shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who should have received free medical care in both 2017 and 2018. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this committee in 2020.

HB694 required the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) to convene a workgroup of all stakeholders to figure out the best process for refunding patients while also maintaining patient privacy and ensuring safe-addresses were used for survivors of intimate partner violence. The workgroup met throughout the fall and there was a consensus among all parties that patients should be refunded.

### SB404/HB333

This year's bill is a technical bill that simply implements the best process to refund patients based on recommendations from the HSCRC workgroup. The bill also provides support to assist affected consumers through the Office of the Attorney General and requires a report on progress to the General Assembly.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by issuing a **favorable** report on SB404/HB333. Thank you.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais  
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