

HB111 - Auto-enroll SNAP recipients into Medicaid

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FAV

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Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

Written Testimony

House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Health and Government Operations Committee – February 7, 2023

Support

Background: House Bill 111 would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which provides social services to low-income Marylanders.

Maryland has one of the highest rates of deep poverty in the country, with almost 50% of those living in poverty being considered as living in deep poverty. Based on 2021 data from the Census Bureau, this legislation would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos.

Other states have already adopted programs like the one proposed in HB111. In fact, more than 30,000 uninsured children in [Louisiana](#) and 90,000 uninsured children in [South Carolina](#) have been enrolled in Medicaid based on SNAP receipt, without needing to complete paperwork.

In short, this legislation would dramatically reduce the number of uninsured Marylanders while improving health equity. **For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB111.**

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

HB111_The Arc Maryland_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



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HB111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment
House Health and Governmental Operations Committee
February 7, 2023
Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of lives of children and adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The Arc Maryland is supportive of House Bill 111.

It is estimated that around 13% of the population in the United States has a disability. This bill is important to our constituents because many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities rely on governmental programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, energy/water assistance, temporary cash assistance and SSI.

Annually, recipients of these benefits must prove continued eligibility to different agencies. This is burdensome, time consuming, and creates unnecessary (and costly) administrative burden for the state. This bill would eliminate the need for multiple calls and submissions of annual paperwork, currently mandated in order to continue to receive needs-based services and financial assistance.

People with disabilities often need assistance in transportation and also assistance to complete and submit paperwork, and communicate to various agencies. If assistance is not readily available, this may cause a delay or denial of services and support for which a person is eligible, and could lead to service terminations as well; causing undo stress and harm.

By passing this bill, we believe that many Marylanders, including people with disabilities, will benefit. State agencies will have less administrative burden and achieve administrative savings by automating these programs for those that are deemed eligible through being found eligible for other programs. Similarly-situated programs across the country exist and have noted the benefits from paperwork-free renewals, and the ability to prevent loss of benefits for families who rely on them.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for House Bill 111.

Sincerely,

Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland akolp@tharcmd.org

HB 111 - Maryland Food Bank - SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Wallerstedt

Position: FAV

House Bill 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment House Health and Government Operations Committee February 7, 2023

SUPPORT

House Bill 111 allows for direct certification and enrollment in public benefit programs, specifically the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Maryland Children’s Health Program based on SNAP eligibility, SNAP enrollment based on SSI eligibility, and utility assistance based on SNAP, TANF, SSI, or VA benefits. It also increases the income limit for energy assistance.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of facing food insecurity. Food insecurity means a lack of consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day. Some communities and populations are at a higher risk of food insecurity, including communities of color, older adults, and families with children. There are food insecure Marylanders in every corner of the state.

Public benefit programs are an absolutely essential means for low-income Marylanders to support their families. The Maryland Food Bank alone processed and submitted over 1,100 SNAP applications in FY 22 through our SNAP Outreach Program, and while that is a sliver of the total applications processed across the state, we can attribute almost 1 million meals to our efforts. With the pandemic-era SNAP Emergency Allotments ending, we are bracing for an increase – potentially significantly – in calls for food assistance. Capturing Marylanders who qualify for benefits such as SNAP but might not yet be enrolled will be crucial to easing this burden not only on the Food Bank and our network of community partners but on the most vulnerable of our neighbors who are food-insecure.

Marylanders who live at or below the Federal Poverty Line and qualify for assistance benefit programs are already at risk of economic and financial instability. Those who are food-insecure specifically are rarely hungry in a vacuum and generally have other needs, such as affordable housing or accessible medical care. Ensuring those Marylanders can access the social safety net programs they need and deserve are critical for supporting their families and eventual economic mobility.

For these reasons, the Maryland Food Bank respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 111.

HB111_JHU_FAV

Uploaded by: Annie Coble

Position: FAV

TO: Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
Assistant Director, State Affairs

DATE: February 7, 2023

RE: HB111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

Johns Hopkins **supports HB111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment.** This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility program to enroll individuals in Medicaid and/or CHIP who are also enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

As one of the largest health care providers in the State, Johns Hopkins whole heartedly supports any efforts to make health insurance more accessible. Johns Hopkins serves thousands of Medicaid recipients every year and we recognize the significant benefits from the creation of the “Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program” in 2019. This program allows Marylanders to enroll in health insurance, including Medicaid, while filing tax-returns. Streamlining the enrollment process allowed nearly 250,000 Marylanders to enroll in health insurance the first year of the program.

Johns Hopkins appreciates the importance of making enrollment in health insurance, and Medicaid in particular, more seamless for Marylanders. On our part, the Johns Hopkins Health System employs financial counselors who are responsible for, among other things, assisting patients with enrollment in Medicaid. Additionally, at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, we pay the salary of a Department of Social Services worker to be onsite to help people enroll in public benefits.

We understand how beneficial it is to our patients to have access to this important resource. Johns Hopkins is committed to doing everything we can to support Medicaid recipients and SNAP beneficiaries to ensure they have the resources they need to live healthy and safe lives. Streamlining Medicaid enrollment for SNAP recipients is an easy, and reasonable tool to do just that.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **HB111**.

HB 111_PJC_FAVORABLE_HGO.pdf

Uploaded by: Ashley Black

Position: FAV



Ashley Black, Staff Attorney
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HB 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Hearing of The House Health & Government Operations Committee

February 7, 2023

3:00 PM

SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health and Benefits Equity Project advocates to protect and expand access to healthcare and safety net services for Marylanders struggling to make ends meet. We support policies and practices that are designed to eliminate economic and racial inequities and enable every Marylander to attain their highest level of health. **PJC strongly supports HB 111**, which would require MDH to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025, to enroll individuals in Medicaid and the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) based on their eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP). It would also require DHS to automatically enroll individuals in SNAP who are financially eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Likewise, it would require the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) to enroll in fuel and utility assistance programs any individuals who are financially eligible for SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SSI or means-tested Veterans Affairs benefits.

HB 111 streamlines the application process for low-income individuals and families who qualify for safety net services, like Medicaid, SNAP and energy assistance, to meet their needs. Based on their income, many individuals and families struggling to make ends meet qualify for critical safety net services. However, administrative burdens, such as filling out multiple applications, and lack of community outreach and education about these programs hinder individuals who qualify from accessing them. Access to healthcare, food and energy are social determinants of health and when these needs are not met, low-income Marylanders can suffer from poor health outcomes, including malnutrition and chronic illness.

HB 111 stands for the principle that no Marylander should have to go without food, access to timely health care or electricity simply because they cannot afford these essentials. HB 111 would allow over 60,000 uninsured individuals to obtain automatic Medicaid eligibility based on their receipt of SNAP benefits. It would also allow TANF recipients, a program reserved for families with children living in deep poverty, to be automatically

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enrolled in fuel and utility assistance programs. Similarly, seniors who are eligible for SSI would have a pathway to addressing food insecurity as HB 111 would authorize DHS to automatically enroll them in SNAP.

HB 111 puts Maryland's low-income individuals and families, including children and seniors, in a better position to address their time-sensitive needs and achieve their highest level of health. If passed, this legislation would enable our State to better eliminate economic and racial inequities in health outcomes.

For these reasons, the Public Justice Center urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **HB 111**. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Ashley Black at 410-625-9409 ext. 224 or blacka@publicjustice.org.

Testimony in Support of HB 111 UULM-MD Betty McGar

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Support for HB 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 7, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

I am Betty McGarvie Crowley from Del. Kaiser's District representing the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD). We are an advocacy organization, with members in 23 UU congregations throughout the state. Since its founding in 2005, health care issues have been a priority and we are an active member of the Health Care for All Coalition.

UULM-MD supports HB 111, Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. The programs in this legislation are essential safety net ones including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland's Children's Health Program, Department of Human Services Programs, Temporary Cash Assistance, and Energy Assistance. This legislation will automatically enroll individuals who are in specific programs into other programs without going through another application process such as seniors in SNAP if they are eligible for Supplemental Security Income.

I first became aware of the difficulty low income and marginalized people had in obtaining needed services in 1963 when I was working in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program at the Prince George's Welfare Department. The paper work then and now is complicated and requires duplication and repetition if the applicant is potentially eligible for more than one program. Over the years I have worked on efforts to streamline, consolidate, and simplify the process for low-income individuals who are often marginalized by color and ethnicity. Many did and do not have the ability to navigate the many bureaucratic procedures that are difficult to comprehend. It is especially hard for individuals who cannot speak or read English. Therefore, many individuals did not and still do not receive essential safety net services.

HB 111 is a major step in helping simplify the eligibility process for many programs. For example, it will enable up to the 60,000 children and adults who receive SNAP to automatically enroll in Medicaid. This would help reduce health care inequity for the 28,000 Latinos and 23,000 Black Marylanders in SNAP who will be able to fill out a single form to enroll in many safety net programs. The quality of lives of individuals who have been denied essential health, social services and other programs will be enhanced by passage of this legislation.

We urge a favorable report of HB 111.

Thank you.

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

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NKH MD_MD HB 0111 Statement of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ayesha Holmes

Position: FAV



MARYLAND

HB0111 – Support
Ayesha Holmes
No Kid Hungry, Maryland
aholmes@strength.org, 410.971.7873

February 7, 2023

**Maryland State Legislature
Health and Government Operations Committee**

HB0111SUPPORT

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee:

No Kid Hungry Maryland writes in support of HB 0111 which will streamline access to benefits based on already-verified eligibility information which is a critical step in reducing the administrative burden on individuals and the state.

Through the No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign, we work with partners, lawmakers, educators, and businesses to identify and eliminate the barriers that may prevent children and families from accessing healthy and nutritious meals. Approximately, 1 in 8 children in Maryland could face hunger this year, and programs like SNAP and school meals play a critical role in reducing food insecurity for children and Maryland families.

The policy outlined in HB 0111 is proven and effective. Using technology and enrollment data across programs is cost saving, improves efficiency, and removes barriers for families tasked to provide very detailed personal financial and household information several times for multiple programs. The Express Lane Eligibility Program is evidence-based, would reduce Maryland’s administrative costs of public benefit programs, and is a proven concept already in use in other states, such as South Carolina and Louisiana.

Implementing an Express Lane Eligibility Program for Medicaid based on SNAP income data is a smart decision especially in anticipation of the unwinding of Medicaid when the Public Health Emergency ends. Additionally, enrolling SSI recipients into SNAP based on their income information removes another burden on applicant and case workers determining eligibility. Low-income families and children would also benefit from the information sharing between SNAP, TANF, SSI, and VA benefits for express lane enrollment in fuel and utility assistance programs.

Again, we strongly support HB 0111, which would streamline eligibility determinations by data sharing, increase retention of those eligible for public benefit programs, and has the potential to save Maryland social service agencies millions of dollars.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

HB111_MedicaidExpressLane_KennedyKrieger_Support.p

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



Kennedy Krieger Institute

DATE: February 7, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations
BILL NO: House Bill 111
BILL TITLE: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

Bill Summary:

HB111 would establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025 to enroll eligible individuals into the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program. Additionally, it would require the Department of Human Services to enroll eligible individuals into the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based, and community-based programs. Over 27,000 individuals receive services annually at Kennedy Krieger.

The vision for the newly established Office for Health Equity Inclusion and Diversity (O-HEID) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is to promote the health and well-being of those who work and receive training and services at Kennedy Krieger Institute. The O-HEID uses evidence, culturally relevant, and equity-based approaches that assures diversity and inclusion. The O-HEID is working to establish collaboration, data, and metrics to address remediable disparities within our patient populations, policies, and practices.

Rationale:

Under the Federal Public Health (PHE) emergency, States were eligible to receive enhanced Medicaid funding as long as they kept individuals continuously enrolled until the conclusion of the PHE. In Maryland, Medicaid and MCHP enrollment grew to 1.398 million in fiscal year 2020, 1.528 million in fiscal year 2021, and 1.654 million in fiscal year 2022, an 18% increase.

On January 11, President Biden announced the PHE will end on May 11th, 2023. The ending of the PHE has many repercussions, including the access of healthcare for millions of individuals.

At the Maryland Department of Health, Medicaid administrators have indicated that they will prioritize renewals for certain groups, including a communications campaign to inform enrollees about renewing coverage. While valiant and appreciated, this legislation establishes a long-term solution to ensure that eligible individuals are able to quickly enroll in Medicaid and CHIP to receive health insurance benefits.

Access to health insurance is critical for the well-being of individuals and the community at large. According to the American Hospital Association, having health-care coverage "improves access to care; supports positive health outcomes, including an individual's sense of their own health and well-being; incentivizes appropriate use of health care resources; and reduces financial strain on individuals, families and communities." Continuous coverage is important so that individuals can access preventative care services before they develop more serious and costly health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. Health-care coverage is also necessary to address behavioral health needs that have rapidly increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, people without insurance tend to put off care and rely on expensive emergency room services that could have been addressed in settings with lower costs. As such, ensuring adequate health-care coverage for Marylanders addresses health disparities and reduces fiscal burden in the long-term for individuals and community stakeholders.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 111.

Contact information: Emily Arneson, AVP Government Affairs – 443.631.2188 or arneson@kennedykrieger.org

HB 111 - Supp to HGO - MD Medical Assistance Progr

Uploaded by: Henry Bogdan

Position: FAV

February 7, 2023

Testimony on House Bill 111

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
House Health and Government Committee**

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1500 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We strongly urge you to support House Bill 111 that would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in Maryland’s Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (“SNAP”).

Based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#), this would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders to get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos. House Bill 111 can dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity and outcomes across the state.

In addition, this legislation would eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland.

House Bill 111 would also improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to electric assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.

For all these reasons we urge you to give House Bill 111 [a favorable report](#).



HB111 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Hindley Williams

Position: FAV



HB111 –Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

SUPPORT

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

House Health and Government Operations Committee, February 7, 2023

The seven Centers for Independent Living (CIL) were established by federal law and work to ensure the civil rights and quality services of people with disabilities in Maryland. Centers for Independent Living are nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. CIL staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network providing the following core services: Information and Referral; Advocacy; Peer Support; Independent Living Skills training and Transition Services.

This bill would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP. The staff of Centers for Independent Living support hundreds of people with disabilities around the state to apply for SNAP, it would increase the efficiency greatly if this application also enrolled individuals in Medicaid. The individuals we support are often dissuaded from applying for public assistance or insurance because of the amount of paperwork and documentation needed. To be able to reduce that would significantly reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity.

This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland. This would be extremely beneficial for individuals with disabilities in Maryland, renewals can be missed and then it is time consuming to reestablish.

This legislation will benefit individuals with disabilities greatly in accessing SNAP and Medicaid in a far more streamlined way.

Contact Information:

Sarah Basehart
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Hindley Williams
The IMAGE Center
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House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Prog

Uploaded by: Jake Whitaker

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Position: *Support*

February 7, 2023

House Health & Government Operations Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 111.

Broad based and comprehensive health coverage, including increased access to the state's Medical Assistance Program, is integral to hospitals' ability to deliver high-quality care.

HB 111 would automatically grant eligibility for and expedite enrollment in the Medical Assistance Program for children and adults enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Census Bureau data for 2021 show this bill would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need and significantly reduce the number of uninsured Marylanders while simultaneously improving health equity. This legislation would also eliminate the administrative work required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating savings for the state.

In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to electric assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors in SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income. HB 111 would ease barriers for eligible Marylanders to enroll in support programs and help them achieve optimal health.

This legislation also supports the aims of Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care Model. Under the Model, Maryland hospitals strive to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals reach beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve. The result: hospitals are taking care of the whole person, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors that influence people's health.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 111.

For more information, please contact:

Jake Whitaker, Director, Government Affairs

Jwhitaker@mhaonline.org

HB111 - FAV - MD Hunger Solutions.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: JD Robinson

Position: FAV



Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

Testimony in Support of HB111

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and
Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 7, 2023**

Dear Chair Pena Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly, and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is JD Robinson. I am the Program Coordinator for SNAP of Maryland Hunger Solutions, a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to end hunger in Maryland by improving participation in the federal nutrition programs. Maryland Hunger Solutions strongly supports House Bill 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment.

This bill has several key provisions, including: automatically granting Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); eliminating the paperwork currently required for SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits; automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI); streamlining utility assistance enrollment; and expanding access to electricity assistance for low-income families.

Based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#), automatically granting Medicaid eligibility to SNAP recipients would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos. In this way, the bill would not only dramatically reduce the number of Maryland residents without healthcare coverage but also advance health equity. Likewise, eliminating the Medicaid re-enrollment requirement for SNAP recipients (which would impact over half a million Maryland residents) and automatically enrolling seniors qualified for SSI in SNAP would reduce the time burden associated with filling out multiple applications, increase access to Medicaid and SNAP, and generate administrative cost savings for state.

This bill will also advance an existing program available to SNAP recipients, Heat & Eat. The Heat & Eat program provides a boosted SNAP benefit for households that receive SNAP, receive energy assistance, and pay their utilities through their rent. The effects of the Heat & Eat program have not yet been felt by Maryland families as SNAP emergency allotments have maximized their benefits, but those provisions are ending in March 2023 and hundreds of thousands will see drastically reduced benefits. Ensuring that all SNAP families that are also categorically eligible for energy assistance receive both programs can help provide additional support to their SNAP benefits at a time when they are needed.



Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

Our on-the-ground experience as an authorized SNAP outreach agency for the state of Maryland has given us a unique perspective on this issue. The increased demand for additional assistance programs such as energy and healthcare is reflected in the number of callers on our toll-free hotline requesting referrals or information for these programs. Of the 400-500 calls we field per month, nearly a quarter ask for information on energy, heat, or medical assistance. We believe that providing streamlined pathways to these programs will improve the health and nutrition of thousands of Marylanders.

In conclusion, we urge a favorable report for HB 111. Thank you for your time.

WDC 2023 Testimony HB0111_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: JoAnne Koravos

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program,
and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
Health and Government Operations Committee – February 7, 2023
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0111. Marylanders who are eligible for safety-net services currently must complete multiple applications annually, including an annual renewal, which are reviewed by different agencies. Because of this complicated, inefficient paperwork system many Marylanders are not receiving or renewing Medicaid and other safety-net benefits. As an example, similar documents are needed for Medicaid enrollment and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Based on [Census Bureau data](#) for 2021, 65,000 Maryland residents who receive SNAP are uninsured - nearly one in five uninsured Marylanders. These residents would automatically be enrolled in Medicaid if this bill were enacted. Streamlining and creating one eligibility process would allow additional families to be served with little to no administrative cost increases and would prevent families from losing benefits due to needless, duplicative paperwork requirements.

Specifically, this bill would:

- Implement Express Lane Eligibility to automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults whom SNAP has already found to have very low income.
- Streamline the process for receiving help by automatically enrolling someone for utility assistance if they qualify for SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SSI, or means-tested veteran's benefits.
- Support seniors by automatically enrolling them for SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Increase the EUSP eligibility income limit to 200% FPL (Federal Poverty Level), matching other basic assistance programs offered by the Department of Human Services for low-income families.

Passage of this bill would be of particular benefit to women and children who are at greatest risk of living in poverty. Streamlining safety-net services will help Maryland families cover their needs and will ensure they don't miss out on important services.

We ask for your support for HB0111 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

Margaret Hadley
WDC Advocacy Committee

BGE - HB111 -HGO – MD Medical Assistance Program.p

Uploaded by: John Quinn

Position: FAV



AN EXELON COMPANY

Position Statement

SUPPORT

Health and Government Operations

2/7/2023

HB 0111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) supports *House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment*. House Bill 111 would direct the state to adopt Categorical Eligibility policies that make people automatically eligible for various benefit programs if they have already been approved for other programs. The bill also raises the income limit for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP), administered by the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP), to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for all applicants; currently that limit is 175% of the Federal Poverty Level, except for those with a member aged 67 or older. These changes would take effect Jan. 1, 2025.

Estimates show that perhaps two-thirds of Maryland households with income low enough to qualify for utility assistance from OHEP fail to get that assistance – a rate that is comparable to most other states. There are many reasons for this gap, including lack of awareness and time, technology and travel constraints. In fact, BGE has worked with OHEP and other public and private agencies to address that gap, through outreach and communications, policy changes to eliminate obstacles to accessing assistance, and technology advances to streamline both the enrollment and verification processes so that more customers can obtain bill payment help.

However, when customers have applied to OHEP and are denied help, roughly two-thirds of these denials are for a failure to complete all the program's information and document requirements. While these requirements are necessary to ensure the integrity of the program, they have proved an insurmountable barrier for too many households struggling to make ends meet. House Bill 111 would ease the "barriers to entry" for these vital basic needs programs, while still ensuring that limited funds are directed only to those who are verified to be income eligible. OHEP estimates that as many as 32,000 additional households would receive its help through this measure.

The bill would direct OHEP to enroll in its fuel and utility assistance programs anyone who meets the financial eligibility requirements for the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Supplemental Security Income
- Means-tested Veterans Affairs benefits.

The bill would also direct the Health Department to create an "Express Lane Eligibility Program" to enroll SNAP recipients in the state's Medical Assistance and Maryland Children's Health Programs, as appropriate, and enroll recipients of Supplemental Security Income in the SNAP program.

An analysis performed for BGE by the E Source research firm shows that nearly half the states have adopted Categorical Eligibility policies of one type or another.

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) has worked for several years to eliminate the database silos between its major benefit programs through the MD THINK project, which is expected to roll out to OHEP by the start of the FY24 program year. The policy changes set out in HB 111 would complement the technological advances of MD THINK and leverage the state's investment in the new platform.

BGE would question the potential fiscal impact stated in the Fiscal and Policy Note. Since none of OHEP's main sources of funding – the electric customer surcharge, the federal LIHEAP program, and the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund – are tied to the state's General Fund but are dedicated and limited sources, it is not clear how the bill as drafted would create an additional obligation on the State's budget, as the fiscal note states, beyond the modest administrative impacts, which are likely to be offset by savings from streamlined application processing.

In fact, a 2020 analysis of OHEP by Eleventh House Solutions showed that states that adopted Categorical Eligibility with streamlined application processing, as DHS is also proposing, "increased their percentage served, [as] administrative percentages decreased."¹ To the extent that increased enrollment does boost demand for utility assistance, the State should consider providing sufficient funding to meet this need, especially this year as the extraordinary COVID-era federal and state funding streams of 2020 and 2021 have been exhausted, but many households are still working their way back from the depths of the COVID-19 recession.

BGE respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable vote on this legislation.

BGE, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.2 million electric customers and more than 655,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. The company's approximately 3,400 employees are committed to the safe and reliable delivery of gas and electricity, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider.

HFAM Testimony HB 111.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph DeMattos

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

House Bill 111: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

February 7, 2023

Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 111.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our skilled nursing members provide the majority of long-term and post-acute care to Marylanders in need and can be found in nearly every jurisdiction of the state.

House Bill 111 requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025 and to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility. Specifically, under this legislation, MDH will establish a fast-track eligibility lane to ensure that Medicaid-qualified individuals and families in Maryland have expeditious access to much-needed services related to healthcare and nutrition, with a focus on providing restaurant and heat-and-go meals to Marylanders most in need. The Department will coordinate the proposed policies of this legislation with counties, pay the costs of such county coordination, and file for federal waivers to establish such an Express Lane Eligibility Program to the extent that a waiver is needed.

According to Feeding America, 100 percent of U.S. counties have some level of food insecurity. Such food insecurity is experienced by many different racial and ethnic groups, and by every age cohort. Sadly, children are most often the victims of food insecurity.

In my personal experience, before the pandemic, it was common for families with loved ones in a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center to eat meals in the center as part of free or discounted meal programs. Unfortunately, in many cases, those programs are less prevalent in our setting due to infectious disease prevention protocols.

People are healthier and children learn better when they have consistent access to healthcare and food. Maryland has the financial resources to take this important step forward, and such a proactive approach will likely lower healthcare and public assistance costs in future years.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee on House Bill 111.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-5132

HB0111_Written&OralTestimony_CapitalAreaFoodBank_2

Uploaded by: Julia Lemp

Position: FAV

Julia Lemp, Advocacy and Public Policy Specialist, Capital Area Food Bank
HB0111 – Categorical Eligibility and Medicaid
Health and Government Operations Committee
Hearing Date 2/7/2023 at 3pm
Testimony of SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Capital Area Food Bank, we offer our support for HB0111 to require the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program to enroll individuals in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program based on eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Capital Area Food Bank serves over 200,000 food insecure residents in the two largest counties in Maryland, Prince George's and Montgomery. Last year, we distributed over 23 million meals to Maryland clients through a partner network of 138 nonprofit organizations and many additional direct distribution sites. However, we strongly believe that food alone will not address food insecurity, and we are thoughtfully engaging in innovative means to address the root causes of hunger. Throughout Maryland, we partake in partnerships and programs that leverage food to facilitate upward economic mobility and take food as medicine approaches to achieve positive health outcomes for our clients.

HB0111 addresses a critical intersection between hunger and health. Our clients, many of whom utilize SNAP to help feed their families, are also facing health disparities and inequities. Individuals in food-insecure households have a much higher rate of developing heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and higher BMI's than their food-secure counterparts. In fact, they are 18 percent more likely to develop ongoing, chronic health conditions according to the USDA. These health challenges carry significant individual economic costs, due to increased healthcare spending and lost earnings. Additionally, low-income individuals may be working jobs that do not even offer healthcare benefits, or they may face preventative costs to obtaining healthcare for themselves and their families.

Removing barriers to healthcare access for low-income families, such as allowing SNAP eligibility to confer eligibility for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program, will put our state one step closer to achieving health equity for all Marylanders.

We strongly encourage a favorable report on HB0111, and appreciate your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

HB 111_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV



FEBRUARY 7, 2023

Streamlining the Application Process for Safety Net Programs Will Increase Participation and Benefit More Eligible Marylanders

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 111

Submitted to the House Health and Government Operations

Thousands of low-income Marylanders rely on safety net programs to meet their health, food, energy and basic needs. Their ability to apply for and receive these benefits is not only beneficial to them personally but also to Maryland's economy. However, many Marylanders do not receive the benefits of these effective anti-poverty tools even if they are eligible. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 111 because it will ultimately ensure more eligible Marylanders receive the benefits they need.**

Maryland families eligible for social safety programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance (TAC), Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), have to fill out multiple applications annually across different agencies to obtain benefits. This can be a tedious and burdensome process often resulting in loss of qualified benefits or inability to renew. This duplicative and complicated process means that often qualified beneficiaries of these social safety programs are failing to apply for, or renew Medicaid or energy assistance benefits¹.

HB 111 will create an Express Lane Eligibility that will automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults whom SNAP has already found to be low-income. It will automatically enroll Marylanders who qualify for SNAP, TAC, SSI, or means-tested utility assistance for veterans, and support seniors by automatically enrolling them for SNAP if they qualify for SSI. This bill will also increase the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) eligibility income limit from 175% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, matching other basic assistance programs offered by the Department of Human Services for low-income families.

It is important to ensure all eligible Marylanders receive the safety net benefits they need because they can have a significant impact on people's lives. Of the 30 percent share of income that households spend on housing, 20 percent is spent on energy costs alone.² Receiving energy assistance can often determine if a family maintains housing, has enough to eat or even remains healthy. This is why it is important that families who qualify are able to apply and that the process is simple and not lengthy or cumbersome.

In Maryland, households at 175% of the federal poverty level – with income below \$38,000 for a family of three, for example – spent an average of 14% of their income on energy costs, but with the help of Maryland

Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) and EUSP benefits their net energy burden (the percent of income spent on energy costs) fell to 9% during 2020. For households up to 200 percent of the poverty level, the average gross energy burden was 12%, while households between 176% and 200% of the FPL had an energy burden of 7%.

Thousands of Maryland's low-income children also remain uninsured even though they qualify for Medicaid and CHIP. Adopting Express Lane Eligibility will increase healthcare access for eligible children by expediting and simplifying the application process by relying on findings from other eligibility determinations. ELE has also proven to reduce administrative burdens and increase savings to the agencies that administer the programs.³

At a time of high inflation and energy costs, low-income Marylanders need support in order to meet their needs and care for those who depend on them. Ensuring that the application process for safety net benefits is smooth and less complicated would guarantee that most qualified Marylanders do not miss out on these resources.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Finance Committee make a favorable report on House Bill 111.

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 111

Bill summary

House Bill 111 ensures that more Marylanders who qualify for safety net programs – such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs – do not miss out on them or lose them by streamlining the process by which people sign up for assistance. It will also establish categorical eligibility, which means one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services for which they are eligible.

Background

Currently, Marylanders who are eligible for safety net services have to constantly complete and renew multiple applications which are reviewed by different agencies. This is a duplicative, lengthy and burdensome process for both the applicant and State agencies. As a result, many Marylanders are not receiving or not renewing Medicaid or energy assistance benefits. A majority of the documents needed to verify energy assistance income-eligibility are also collected for SNAP or Temporary Cash Assistance. Yet 30,000 SNAP households who claim a heating or cooling expense do not receive Energy Assistance. Similar documents are needed for Medicaid enrollment. Based on Census Bureau data for 2021, 65,000 uninsured state residents receive SNAP—nearly one in five uninsured Marylanders (17%)⁴.

Equity Implications

- Black and Latinx households are far more likely than white households to earn poverty-level wages and are therefore more likely to qualify for safety-net benefits. While state and federal safety-net benefits serve a larger number of white households than households in any other racial or ethnic group, they serve a larger proportion of people of color.

- Social safety nets also have a disproportionate positive impact in reducing poverty rates among households of color.⁵

Impact

House Bill 111 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

¹ Bennett Leckrone, “Utility Bill Aid Available, But Some Don’t Know They Qualify”, Maryland Matters, Feb.10, 2021. [Utility Bill Aid Available, But Some Don't Know They Qualify - Maryland Matters](#)

² Office of People Counsel, “Maryland Low-Income Market Characterization Report”, 2022 Report Update. September 2022 https://opc.maryland.gov/Portals/o/Files/Publications/Reports/Maryland%20Low-Income%20Market%20Characterization_September%202022%20final.pdf?ver=7fFmfM9UomFT8s81cHe6HO%3d%3d

³ Suzanne Murrin, “State Use of Express Lane Eligibility for Medicaid and Chip Enrollment.” Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General. Oct. 2016. <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-15-00410.asp>

⁴ Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Megan Schouweiler and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, analysis from 2021 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

⁵ Danilo Tirisi and Matt Saenz “Economic Security Programs Reduce Overall Poverty, Racial and Ethnic Inequities,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Jul. 1, 2021. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/economic-security-programs-reduce-overall-poverty-racial-and-ethnic>

2023-HB111-PHI-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Lanzarotto

Position: FAV



February 7, 2023

112 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

FAVORABLE - House Bill 111- Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

As it relates to electric companies, House Bill 111 alters the eligibility requirements for the electric universal service program (EUSP) to 200% of the federal poverty limit for all program applications.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected customers and communities across our service areas. Because of this, Pepco and Delmarva Power have taken extensive steps since March of 2020 to assist customers, including temporarily suspending service disconnections, waiving late fees, reconnecting customers who lost service prior to the pandemic, where safe to do so, offering extended payment plans, and enhancing outreach and engagement to customers regarding energy assistance options available from the companies as well as state, local and non-profit organizations. House Bill 111 will streamline the application process for low-income customers by keeping the categorical eligibility for the EUSP program consistent with other programs customers apply for.

Streamlining the categorical eligibility for the EUSP program application process will be extremely helpful to vulnerable populations in the state and keep customers connected and Pepco and Delmarva Power support that approach.

Contact:

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Senior Manager, State Affairs
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HB0111.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Cammarata

Position: FAV

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General



CANDACE McLAREN LANHAM
Chief of Staff

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.

February 3, 2023

To: The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: House Bill 0111 (Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment):
Support

The Office of the Attorney General supports House Bill 0111. This bill would permit individuals who are eligible for certain social services programs to receive benefits in other programs with overlapping eligibility requirements without necessitating a separate application, improving services to the state's most vulnerable populations and increasing the efficiency of the state's administration of these programs. For example, individuals eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program qualify for SNAP benefits with household incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level, which means they are also income-eligible in Maryland for Medicaid which provides eligibility up to 138% of FPL (and an even higher threshold for pregnant women and children). Likewise, recipients of Supplemental Security Income have income already verified below the FPL for SNAP benefits, and recipients of these and other programs have overlapping eligibility for fuel and utility assistance programs. Requiring separate applications for each of these programs increases the burden for applicants and the costs for state agencies administering these programs.

This common-sense approach has been recognized as a key opportunity by national policymakers, particularly as the COVID-19 public health emergency winds down and many individuals and families risk losing benefits that were extended for public health and safety.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/opportunities-for-states-to-coordinate-medicaid-and-snap-renewals>

<https://www.medicaid.gov/resources-for-states/downloads/eligibility-enrollment-rules.pdf> (Renewal Flexibilities, slides 55-58)

We ask the committee to give the bill a favorable report.

cc: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, Sponsor

Support AHA HB111 Maryland Medical Assistance Prog

Uploaded by: Laura Hale

Position: FAV



February 2, 2023

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association

Support of HB 111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Honorable Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. The American Heart Association extends its strong support for House Bill 111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

Access to healthcare is essential and too many Marylanders struggle with the cumbersome paperwork requirements to enroll in the many programs that support health such as Medicaid and SNAP. With this legislation we can help to change all that and make the lives of low-income Marylanders a little bit easier. By automatically granting Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP, this will help connect people in need into the programs the state has set up to support them in the first place. Based on Census Bureau data for 2021, it would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity. This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland. In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to electric assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on House Bill 111 to support the health of all Marylanders.

hb111- MCHP, SNAP, MEAP, etc. HGO 2-7-2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Lee Hudson

Position: FAV



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Health and Government Operations Committee
on
House Bill 111
February 7, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity for my community to support sufficiency and well-being for all. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories in our State.

Sufficient livelihood and access to appropriate and affordable health care for all people have been adopted for moral deliberation within our community, and in our public discourse (ELCA, "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All," 1999; "Caring for Health," 2003).

Maryland has done good things with the mechanism of notification about access to State social programs through filings and applications (for example, *House Bills 234 and 252* of 2022). **House Bill 111** would extend that administrative instrument across Maryland's human services programs with convergent eligibility standards. It would make sign-up for social services such as Medicaid, MCHP, SNAP, EUSP and MEAP, *et al*, a single exercise with categorical eligibility, one standard for enrolling in all the available services when qualified for any single one.

The services and eligibility for them are established (and we appreciate that the bill expands eligibility in EUSP). Yet there remain people without adequate medical care, or nutrition, or safe shelter, who do not, or cannot apply. Multiple application processes with annual renewal requirements, asking for the same information, amounts to a barrier for eligible clients of State services. It also creates an administrative burden for the State.

House Bill 111 would bring the programs to eligible clients in an efficient and effective manner, illustrated by prior "express lane" State initiatives that have increased participation. Because of that, and because of the good it would do for residents of the State, we urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson

Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



**Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony in Support of HB111
Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services
Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment
February 7, 2023**

TO: The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair; The Honorable Ariana Kelly, Vice Chair; and
Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County's local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, strongly supports HB111. This bill helps to address a significant challenge for many lower-income Marylanders, which is access to critical services. The bill would create an "Express Lane Eligibility" for Medical Assistance and the Children's Health Program for those who are already eligible for SNAP. The bill would also establish categorical eligibility for SNAP for those who are eligible for SSI, along with categorical eligibility for energy assistance programs for those who qualify for SNAP, TANF, SSI, or means-tested Veterans Affairs benefits.

The issue that HB111 aims to address, improving access to services, has been a primary focus for the Community Action Agency, a program of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, and our board. Many residents struggle to access services simply because the system is so complex and the application processes are so lengthy. Participants in our board's advocacy training program for lower-income residents, the Community Advocacy Institute, share that it is extremely difficult to access social services in the County, often due to confusion about eligibility requirements, but also because of lack of awareness, language barriers, lack of transportation, and lack of time. These barriers are a primary area of concern highlighted in our Agency's Community Needs Assessment, which will soon be finalized and posted on the Community Action website.

To address these concerns, the Community Action Agency has been at the forefront of working with DHHS and partners to establish a navigation program in Montgomery County, based on our Agency's decades of experience in delivering services to a diverse population at the Takoma- East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center in Long Branch. Like the TESS staff, highly trained navigators work closely with residents and our DHHS colleagues, including those within DHHS Eligibility & Support Services, and community-based nonprofit partners, to connect them with a wide variety of services. This helps clients avoid the need to travel to multiple offices, often utilizing public transportation, to simply apply for services. The navigation program uses a 2Gen/Whole Family approach to address the needs of everyone in a household, applying best practices from The Maryland Community Action Partnership, which receives funding from the Maryland Department of Human Services to advance this practice across the state.

The Community Action Board strongly supports this bill as it will improve access to important services for Maryland residents. We encourage the Committee to explore other programs and policies that will reduce barriers for individuals and families trying to access services, including additional funding for 2Gen/Whole Family services like the navigation program described above. We ask the Committee for a favorable report for HB 111.

WA- HB 111 - Public Benefit Eligibility - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Klingenmaier

Position: FAV



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432
Phone: 410.261.5874 • Fax: 410.889.0203

House Bill 111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 7, 2023

Support

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate about and advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates supports HB 111, which requires the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health to streamline access to safety-net programs by automatically enrolling individuals in public benefits based on their eligibility for other safety-net programs.

Amidst record inflation and unemployment, many Marylanders are struggling to make ends meet. Before the pandemic, one in ten Marylanders were living at or below the Federal Poverty Line, and COVID has only exacerbated the struggles of low-income individuals and families.¹ Predictably, the need for safety-net programs in our state has exploded, and has put a spotlight on the entrenched barriers and inequities that have long existed in our programs and policies to address and end poverty, especially for Black and Brown communities that have disproportionately borne the brunt of economic downturns due to systemic racism and historic disinvestment. A dizzying maze of applications, departments, and varying eligibility requirements means that - even for Marylanders who qualify – safety-net programs only reach a fraction of the people who need them.

Public benefit programs – like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid - provide vital resources to low-income families, and strengthen our State's economy. Families use benefits to purchase housing, food, transportation, and other basic needs. These funds are immediately spent in the local economy, generating economic growth. Consequently, improving access to safety-net programs benefits families and Maryland's businesses, communities, and local economies. In regards to health coverage, studies demonstrate that individuals who are uninsured have higher rates of illness, die younger, and are often only one emergency department visit away from a financial crisis.² Without improving access to safety-net programs, Marylanders will continue to bear the societal costs of uncompensated care, homelessness, and poverty.

HB 111 simplifies access to safety-net programs by automatically enrolling individuals in benefits they are eligible for based on their eligibility for other programs. Welfare Advocates believes that all Marylanders should have easy access to the public benefits they are eligible for, and categorical eligibility is an important step to improve the economic security of Marylanders struggling in or near poverty.

WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 111.

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, *Chair of Welfare Advocates*

¹ US Census Bureau. 2020. American Community Survey

² Kaiser Family Foundation. 2022. *Key Facts about the Uninsured Population*. <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/>

Testimony.HB111_Delegate Lorig Charkoudian.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV

LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
Legislative District 20
Montgomery County

Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Public Utilities

Chair, Unemployment Insurance



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The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 111- MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, MARYLAND CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROGRAM, AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS- ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The current process for safety net services in Maryland is administratively burdensome for applicants and inefficient from a state agency perspective. Individuals who are eligible for safety net services currently have to complete multiple applications which are reviewed by different agencies. Most of these applications require similar documents. Many of these applications must also be resubmitted annually in order to prevent loss of coverage. Because of this complicated process, many Marylanders are not receiving or renewing Medicaid or utilizing energy assistance programs even though they meet the eligibility requirements.

This bill implements Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) to automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults whom SNAP has already found to have very low income. It automatically enrolls someone for utility assistance if they qualify for SNAP, TANF, SSI or means-tested veteran's benefits. It supports seniors by automatically enrolling someone for SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income. Lastly, it increases the EUSP eligibility income limit to 200% FPL, matching other basic assistance programs offered by the Department of Human Services for low-income families.

Many other states already enable Express Lane Eligibility automatic processing for Medicaid enrollment including Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, and South Dakota.¹ All states who use ELE have reported benefits including reduced administrative burden and cost savings. Alabama and South Carolina each saved more than one million per year in administration costs by using ELE.² Further, use of these programs has concretely reduced the number of uninsured individuals and families in these states. For example, in Massachusetts, only 2% to 4% of ELE families lost Medicaid at redetermination, compared to 22% to 34% of similar families not participating in ELE.³

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 111.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services- Office of Inspector General. "State Use of Express Lane Eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment." (2016) <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-15-00410.pdf>

² "CHIPRA Mandated Evaluation of Express Lane Eligibility: Final Findings." (December 2013) https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/migrated_legacy_files/138071/ELE%20Final%20Report%20to%20ASPE%2012%202011%202013.pdf

³ <https://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Waivers/1115/downloads/ma/MassHealth/ma-masshealth-cms-apprvd-demo-period-final-2014-2017-09252019.pdf>

HB 111 Economic Action Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: Marceline White

Position: FAV



Testimony to the Health and Government Operations Committee
HB 111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health
Program, and Social Services Programs-Eligibility and Enrollment
Position: Favorable

February 7, 2022

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Health & Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Health & Government Operations Committee

Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are here in support of HB 111 and urge a favorable report.

Our direct service programs screen individuals for eligibility for food, energy, and other cost-savings programs. In 2022, we saved Maryland families \$50,000 through earned-benefits screenings. Each year we screen hundreds of consumers across the state that were unaware that they qualified for these critical programs. Often, individuals save enough to move from financial precarity to being able to save a portion of their income.

In addition, many programs require onerous paperwork and financial records in order to qualify. Many of our clients move frequently and these financial records may be misplaced or difficult to locate. The paperwork is not simple and requires time to navigate—time that may be lacking for individuals working an hourly job or balancing work and child/elder care. This is one of the reasons our program is so successful, we assist clients who need dedicated assistance to complete the paperwork to receive assistance.

We strongly support HB 111 because we believe that presumptive eligibility makes sense. If an individual has demonstrated financial need to receive state assistance in one area, it is reasonable to assume that the individual will qualify for other programs with similar income thresholds. Fast-tracking

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ID 52-2266235

individuals into these programs benefits struggling families, reduces paperwork and inefficiencies in the system, and ensures that our programs are reaching families as intended.

For all these reasons, we support HB 111 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

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ID 52-2266235

Economic Action Maryland is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

HB111 testimony 2-3-2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Mat Rice

Position: FAV

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

Delegate Charkoudian Health and Government Operations Hearing February 7, 2023

Requiring the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025, to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program; requiring the Department of Human Services to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program; requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to enroll certain individuals in certain energy assistance programs; etc.

Position: Support

Dear members of the Health and Operations committee,
People on the Go of Maryland, (People on the Go) the statewide self-advocacy organization, ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) offers this written testimony in support of HB0111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025, to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program. Also requires the Department of Human Services to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program; requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to enroll certain individuals in certain energy assistance programs. People on the Go have seen firsthand how important the Maryland Medical Assistance Program is to individuals with disabilities and we believe that everyone has the right to affordable and equal health care and health insurance. We strongly suggest a Favorable Report.

If there are any questions, please contact Cody Drinkwater, Public Policy Assistant

perc Orion@aim.com

phone: 443-866-3055

HB111_FAV_Virtual and Written_Melanie Townsend Dig

Uploaded by: Melanie Townsend Diggs

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Melanie Townsend Diggs

February 6, 2023

Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB111.

I am currently the South Area Director for the Prince George's County Memorial Library System, and I have served on the Board of Families USA, a national consumer health care advocacy group. I fully support this legislation which would reduce barriers for Marylanders to get the health care services they need. I personally was enrolled in Medicaid during a difficult time for my family, and I appreciated the people who helped me get connected and enrolled because I did not know that I was eligible.

As a librarian, I have also assisted people who had trouble navigating the health care system. We in Maryland need to do everything that we can to make the system as simple as possible, so everyone is able to access the coverage for which they are already eligible.

This bill would help break down barriers to access because Marylanders who have already gone through the process of enrolling in SNAP will be automatically enrolled into Medicaid, and by doing so, reducing the unnecessary paperwork for SNAP recipients to remain enrolled in Medicaid. This bill would also help Marylanders get connected with utility services and help seniors enroll in SNAP, making this bill like a one-stop-shop for beneficial services to a community in need.

Thank you very much for your consideration and I urge a favorable report for HB111.

HB0111_FAV_Montgomery County Food Council .pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Caruso

Position: FAV



February 7, 2023

**2023 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
HB0111: Categorical Eligibility Enrollment for SNAP**

BILL: HB0111: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Program - Eligibility and Enrollment
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Testimony in Support of House Bill 0111
BILL ANALYSIS: Requiring the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program to enroll individuals in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children’s Health program; requiring the Maryland Department of Human Services to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program; requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in assistance programs; and generally relating to eligibility for and enrollment in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and social services programs.

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill to establish categorical eligibility programs for social services programs, including SNAP, to reduce the burden on Maryland families who have a right to these benefits.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced many families to grapple with issues relating to food affordability and greatly increased the number of people reliant on social service programs to help their families. The hunger crisis that developed resulted in record-setting SNAP enrollment rates throughout the state, an over 40% increase in demand amongst regional food assistance providers, and significant supply chain challenges that left grocery store and food bank shelves empty. Supporting this bill to create an express lane eligibility program will help to reduce the burden on families as well as the state of Maryland, and ensure that as many eligible individuals as possible are enrolled in these programs.

The current SNAP application process creates a large barrier to entry for many eligible residents. Language, technology, and other issues have created an enrollment process that is a huge burden on eligible individuals and the state as well. With the scheduled end of Emergency Allotments, the SNAP program is likely to see increased strain. This bill can begin the process of removing some of these burdens by automatically enrolling eligible individuals/families into these vital programs.



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The use of SNAP dollars is a great benefit to the Maryland economy as a whole. Every \$1 in SNAP benefits generates as much as \$1.80 in local economic activity. With more issues related to climate on the horizon, the SNAP program, and other social services programs are going to continually see increased need and create a bigger burden on a system that is already understaffed. The implementation of categorical eligibility will save the state of Maryland both time and money while allowing resources to be dedicated elsewhere through automatic enrollment and removing the burdensome process that currently exists. It is important that this process is undertaken immediately so that the state of Maryland can be ready for any disturbances that could come in the future.

This bill will also advance an existing program available to SNAP recipients, Heat & Eat. The Heat & Eat program provides a boosted SNAP benefit for households that receive SNAP, receive energy assistance, and pay their utilities through their rent. The effects of Heat & Eat have not yet been felt by Maryland families as SNAP emergency allotments have maximized their benefits, but those provisions are ending in March 2023. Ensuring that all SNAP families that are also categorically eligible for energy assistance receive both programs can help provide an additional boost to their SNAP benefits.

We strongly support this bill to establish categorical eligibility for social services programs. The SNAP program, as well as many other social service programs, are a vital part of the Maryland economy and as we continue to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic these programs will continually be relied upon by the state's most vulnerable residents. Express lane eligibility enrollment will allow the state to save time and money and rededicate resources elsewhere while also greatly benefiting residents of Maryland and the Maryland economy. The implementation of categorical eligibility is an opportunity to help Maryland's most vulnerable residents, boost the Maryland economy, and continue to create safety nets for any future issues the state might face. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports HBo111 and urges a FAVORABLE REPORT for this bill.**

The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources

For more information, please contact Massa Cressall, Interim Executive Director, at the email and phone number below.



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HB 111- LWVMD- FAV- Express Lane Eligibility.pdf

Uploaded by: Nora Miller Smith

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 111: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs- Eligibility and Enrollment

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, President

DATE: February 7, 2023

The League of Women Voters Maryland supports **House Bill 111: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs- Eligibility and Enrollment**, which would help more low-income Marylanders obtain health insurance coverage by decreasing the administrative burdens associated with Medicaid's application and renewal processes. The bill would establish Express Lane Eligibility, automatically granting Medicaid eligibility to adults and children who already qualify for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

The League of Women Voters believes that healthcare is a human right. All Marylanders need accessible, equitable, affordable, quality health care. But access to that health care is largely determined by one's ability to obtain health insurance.

Lack of health insurance can be deadly.¹ An Institute of Medicine report found that **"The uninsured have poorer health and shortened lives.... Uninsured patients, even when acutely ill or seriously injured, cannot always obtain needed care..."**

Almost 6% of Maryland residents remain uninsured. Per the *Commonwealth Fund's 2022 Scorecard on State Health System Performance*, Maryland did poorly on "disparity indicators" such as uninsured adults (ranking 23rd out of the 50 states and D.C.), uninsured children (28th), and adults who went without care because of costs in the past year (39th). Racial and ethnic disparities were also evident in the report. While only 4% of White Marylanders were uninsured, 29% of Latinx residents had no health insurance coverage.

Passing House Bill 111 would increase the number of low-income Marylanders with health insurance by establishing **categorical eligibility**. **Marylanders would be able to enroll in multiple safety-net programs with the same eligibility requirements at the same time**, thus eliminating many of the administrative burdens that often prevent people from obtaining the assistance for which they're qualified. **Categorical eligibility would eliminate the current requirement that, even if already proven eligible for one low-income assistance program such as SNAP, an individual needs to go through the same financial eligibility determination process, requiring submission of**

¹ "The Relationship of Health Insurance and Mortality: Is Lack of Insurance Deadly?" by Steffie Woolhandler, MD, MPH, et al, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 19 September 2017

essentially the same paperwork, to qualify for or keep their energy assistance or Medicaid benefits.

Currently a federal health emergency has paused Medicaid redeterminations, but once the emergency ends, then Medicaid recipients will have to renew their benefit eligibility through a redetermination process once every twelve months. Renewal instructions will be sent to Medicaid recipients by mail, and they will have to respond by submitting the requested income information according to a strict timeline. But mail can be lost, instructions misunderstood, or forms filled out incorrectly due to language or literacy barriers. Missed deadlines and incomplete paperwork lead to lapsed coverage, and getting benefits reinstated is a cumbersome and time-consuming process, piling on additional administrative costs for the State.

The real-life consequence of this complicated, inefficient system will be that many Marylanders will not get the medical care they need. Streamlining the process is in the best interests of patients, providers, and the Maryland Medicaid system itself. Administrative costs will decrease, thus enabling more Medicaid funds to be used for disease prevention and treatment.

Passing House Bill 111 and instituting Express Lane Eligibility will streamline the application process for crucial assistance programs. This program is of vital importance, and for that reason the **League of Women Voters Maryland and its 1,500+ members urge the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 111.**

HB0111-DTMG-FAV-2-7-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Olivia Bartlett

Position: FAV



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Testimony on: HB0111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Bill Contact: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several neighboring counties. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all Maryland residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. HB0111 will support those goals by streamlining the process by which people sign up for safety-net services such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and fuel and utility energy assistance programs. By establishing categorical eligibility, one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services.

HB0111 would:

- Implement Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) to automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults who SNAP already has determined meet financial eligibility requirements.
- Streamline the process for receiving assistance by automatically enrolling someone for fuel and utility assistance if they qualify for SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Means-Tested Veteran’s Affairs Benefits.
- Support seniors by automatically enrolling someone for SNAP if they qualify for SSI.
- Expand eligibility to participate in the electric universal service program to 200% of the FPL.

Thirty thousand SNAP households who claim a heating or cooling expense currently do not receive Energy Assistance. Sixty-five thousand people, or seventeen percent of those covered by SNAP, are not covered by Medicaid. Streamlining and creating one eligibility process will allow additional eligible families in Maryland to be served essential assistance with little to no administrative cost increases.

For all these reasons, DTMG strongly supports HB0111 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
oliviabartlett@verizon.net
240-751-5599

HB111_Written Testimony_Favorable_MdPHA.docx.1.30.

Uploaded by: Oluwatosin Olateju

Position: FAV



Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy ***Vision:*** Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111
Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social
Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee
By: Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)
February 7, 2023**

Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the House HGO Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 111. This bill would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP.

Based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#),¹ it would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity. This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland. In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to electric assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income. Thank you for your consideration and we urge a favorable report for HB 111.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.

**Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)
PO Box 7045 · 6801 Oak Hall Ln · Columbia, MD 21045-9998
GetInfo@MdPHA.org www.mdpha.org 443.475.0242**

¹ Ipums usa. (n.d.). Retrieved January 30, 2023, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>

HB0111_FAV_MedChi, MDAAP, MACHC, MDACOG_Med. Ass.,

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: FAV



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



ACOG
The American College of
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Maryland Section

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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Lorig Charkoudian

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Andrew G. Vetter
Christine Krone
410-244-7000

DATE: February 7, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 111 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 111.

House Bill 111 establishes an express lane eligibility program for enrollment of individuals in Medicaid, the Children's health program, the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), and the energy assistance program. It requires the State to apply for a federal waiver, if necessary, to maximize the number of State residents who may qualify for the express lane eligibility program. The legislation also amends the eligibility requirements for the energy assistance program to ensure enrollment can be accomplished through the express lane eligibility program.

Creation of this program will facilitate enrollment in key safety programs that address the needs of Maryland's most challenged populations. It is often challenging for these individuals to understand how to access enrollment and in many instances, individuals may not know what programs exist or how to enroll. House Bill 111 will enhance cross agency cooperation and communication and will provide an efficient and effective approach to ensuring the eligible Maryland residents are able to access all programs for which they may be eligible. A favorable report is requested.

HB0111_CC_Vaughan_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Regan Vaughan

Position: FAV



House Bill 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 7, 2023

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore strongly supports HB 111, which requires the Department of Human Services and Department of Health to streamline access to safety-net programs by auto-enrolling individuals in public benefits based on their eligibility for other safety-net programs.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors.

As one of the largest human service providers in Maryland, we work every day with low-income families and see firsthand the challenges and difficulties they face attempting to enroll in and sustain public benefits. We have caseworkers across our programs and across the state that help families and seniors apply for benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Cumbersome applications, missing paperwork, refusals to accept written applications, and materials sent in the wrong language are just some of the barriers our caseworkers see every day when helping families navigate safety-net program eligibility. We know that public benefits are vitally important in the effort to assist low-income seniors and families meet their basic needs, but enrolling and maintaining benefits is a herculean effort.

Passing HB 111 will directly improve the economic security of low-income Marylanders, and generate economic growth for the state as a whole. Automatically enrolling Marylanders in public benefits they are eligible for based on their eligibility for similar programs will reduce the burdensome paperwork and travel often required to apply for benefits. Automating public benefit eligibility will increase access to reliable food, health care, and utilities for the families we work with, building their overall economic security. Improving access to public benefits also benefits our state's local economy and public health: healthy families with secure incomes go into their local communities and spend their resources on clothes, food, and other basic necessities. Categorical eligibility – like proposed in HB 111 – is a national best practice that Maryland should adopt in the effort to ensure low-income seniors and families receive all of the public benefits they are eligible for.

On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 111.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy

Testimony In Support of HB 111 SB 26 - House Healt

Uploaded by: Rich Ceruolo

Position: FAV



February 3, 2023

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 111 / SB 26: Equal Access to Maryland's Medical, Health, Heat and Food Programs

Members of the Maryland House's Health & Gvt Ops Committee. We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1500 members and support our local non-profits that fill necessary roles in our non-profit support and services networks. We fully support HB 111 and the help that it will bring to all the citizens in need of assistance, especially those that are critically ill, senior citizens living on meager budgets, families living in poverty or those living with a disability.

We stand with our partners in this work, Partnership for Children Youth and Families and Critical Needs Program and the Cancer Support Foundation. Programs like energy assistance, food assistance, health care and heat / fuel assistance are absolutely crucial to the very survival of these populations of Maryland citizens. Yes to an express lane process for those folks that need these support programs!

Access to these programs has been a too high of a hurdle that many simply cannot overcome. Barriers like the complicated MD Think system, access to the portal & application as well as the people trained in navigating this system, are often hard to find and benefit from their knowledge. These barriers to these necessary services should not exist. Especially as these programs impact a variety of communities including; Black, Brown, Disabled, the elderly or infirmed, Poor, Non-English Speakers, Veterans and Non-Veterans alike.

And in these early days of the early implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's future, their services are something that all of us with school aged children, and local school districts will be relying on even more heavily.

The future of Maryland's interlocking support service networks supports the lives of so many citizens. And the future care of all Maryland citizens relies on these networks and its service providers. Please support and protect the rights of citizens that struggle with a critical illness or disability with improving access to these services programs and grants. Today and into the future of the implementation of Maryland's Blueprint law. We ask the committee to please offer your full support for House Bill 111.

Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo | richceruolo@gmail.com Parent, Lead Advocate and Director of Public Policy
Parent Advocacy Consortium <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>

HB 111- Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryl

Uploaded by: Robin McKinney

Position: FAV



HB 111- Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
Health and Government Operations Committee

February 7th, 2023

SUPPORT

Chairwoman Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 111. This bill will streamline the process by which people sign up for safety-net services such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs. By establishing categorical eligibility, one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

There are many Marylanders that are low-income and are eligible to receive public benefits and services that could alleviate the strain of coping with inflation and future economic downturns. There are a number of programs available but accessing those programs can be a daunting task. Each department has separate application forms and similar but disconnected processes. This produces a confusing series of steps that fracture a family's time and resources into needlessly inefficient exertions. **The more stress an individual or family experiences, the less capacity they have to navigate through complicated processes.** HB 111 will not only help families apply for multiple benefits they are eligible for, but it will also help ease the administrative burden for state agencies.

This bill will provide an opportunity for better coordination among service agencies and lead to a smoother experience for struggling families. The effects of COVID-19 showed the need to simplify applying for social benefits for families and state agencies. There was an influx of families who applied for assistance and a significant delay in receiving it due to backlog. CASH has seen a significant increase in our client's needs pertaining to benefit screening, and HB 111 will ensure that individuals and families can access and receive the assistance they truly need.

This bill will:

- Implement Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) to automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults whom SNAP has already found to have very low income.
- Streamline the process for receiving help by automatically enrolling someone for utility assistance if they qualify for SNAP, TANF, SSI, or means-tested veteran's benefits.
- Support seniors by automatically enrolling someone for SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.
- Increase the EUSP eligibility income limit to 200% FPL, matching other basic assistance programs offered by the Department of Human Services for low-income families

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 111.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope

2023 MCHS HB 111 MCHS FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 111 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System supports *House Bill 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Program – Eligibility and Enrollment*. The bill provides a framework for ensuring people who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to enroll seamlessly into Medicaid.

We support this initiative because it could remove extra steps to enrollment in Medicaid, thereby reducing the barriers to obtain Medicaid coverage. Maryland has made tremendous progress in reducing the number of uninsured, but the remaining 6.5% fall into communities with fewest resources. Coverage is a critical strategy in improving their health outcomes.ⁱ

We ask for a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.kff.org/state-category/health-coverage-uninsured/?state=md>

Conner_BMNCBV_FAV_HB111.pdf

Uploaded by: Sandra Conner

Position: FAV

**Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of
Baltimore and Vicinity (BMNCBV)**
5405 York Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21212, (443) 386.4739



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111
BEFORE THE HOUSE HGO COMMITTEE
BY REV. DR. SANDRA CONNER, PRESIDENT, BMNCBV
February 7, 2023**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for a very important health bill that will automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP. BMNCBV acknowledges that Maryland has some of the best health systems in the country. It is our understanding that it is ranked 5th in the nation for having the best healthcare system; and we applaud this achievement. However, we believe more can and should be done to improve access to healthcare/coverage and to reduce inequities.

This legislation would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity. This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland. In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to energy and water assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.

We believe this bill, HB 111, will make some improvements in health coverage and access to health care for the communities that we serve. We pray that our legislators will heed our call and give a favorable report.

We thank you in advance for your actions towards HB 111.

Rev. Dr. Sandra Conner

443.695.2447

revdrconner@gmail.com

MSCAN - HB 111 - Public Benefit Eligibility - FAV[

Uploaded by: Sarah Miicke

Position: FAV



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Mental Health
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating
Center

MSCAN Co-Chairs:
Carol Lienhard
Sarah Mücke
410-542-4850

HB 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 7, 2023

SUPPORT

The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing, health and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports HB 111, which requires the Department of Health and Department of Human Services to streamline access to safety-net programs by auto-enrolling individuals in public benefits based on their eligibility for other safety-net programs.

Many of our seniors are on fixed incomes and struggle with meeting their basic needs. Nearly one in five low-income seniors in Maryland struggles with hunger, resulting in Maryland having the 8th highest food insecurity rate among low-income seniors.¹ Tragically, at the same time, older adults are one of the fastest growing demographics of people experiencing homelessness. The pandemic has only exacerbated these issues, as seniors struggle to afford food, housing, medicines, and other basic necessities amongst rising costs of inflation.

Automatically enrolling low-income seniors in benefits they are eligible for reduces the technological and accessibility barriers many seniors face trying to access public benefits. The process for applying for public benefits is complex and cumbersome to navigate, generally requiring access to technology as well as reliable transportation, which many low-income older adults struggle to obtain. There is also a fear of stigma associated with receiving public assistance, and a lack of knowledge on how to receive benefits.² Streamlining public benefits eligibility by allowing seniors who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to be automatically enrolled in other benefits will improve the health and safety of low-income older adults struggling to make ends meet.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 111.
Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Maryland Hunger Solutions. 2019. Senior Hunger in Maryland.

http://mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/Senior_hunger_fact_sheet_OFFICIAL.pdf

² Benefits Data Trust. 2022. New Research Shows Ways to Reduce Stigma Among Older Adults of Accessing Benefits. <https://bdtrust.org/new-research-shows-ways-to-reduce-stigma-among-older-adults-of-accessing-benefits-1/>

HB 111_MAP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Stacey Jefferson

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 2, 2023

Submitted by Kali Schumitz and Mark Huffman, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Energy Advocates
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Job Opportunities Task Force
Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Food Bank
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair
P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701
E: kschumitz@mdeconomy.org

Mark Huffman, Co-Chair
P: (301) 776-0442 x1033
E: MHuffman@laureladvocacy.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 111, which requires the Maryland Department of Health to start an Express Lane Eligibility Program to enroll individuals into certain programs. And this bill requires the Department of Human Services to categorically make eligible and automatically enroll with one streamlined application income-eligible individuals and households for SNAP and Energy Assistance.

HB 111's benefits are significant:

- Automatically enrolling people for energy bill pay assistance if they qualify for SNAP, TANF, SSI and means-tested veteran's benefits.
- Reducing the duplicity of multiple trips, multiple documents, for residents.
- Reducing the intake flow for state benefit offices.
- Ensuring that seniors and vulnerable low-income household's power stays on as many receive SNAP, went through the SNAP application process, and certifiers missed the opportunity to check for energy assistance needs.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 111.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

DR MYLES IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Klapper

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Before the House HGO Committee

Dr. David Myles

February 7, 2023

Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am writing to you today in support of House Bill 111. As a pediatrician, I am deeply committed to finding ways to ensure that the children in our state have access to quality, affordable health care, and Medicaid coverage is an essential tool to achieving this goal. With the end of public health emergency, states now face an unwinding process of continuous Medicaid enrollment, leaving many children at risk of losing coverage due to procedural disenrollment. It is important that Maryland works to reduce this administrative “churn,” to ensure that our most vulnerable populations are not hurt by unnecessary disenrollment. This bill would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP, streamlining the process by eliminating paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland. Additionally, based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#), it would help over 60,000 currently uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity. Not only does this legislation provide administrative savings to the state, but it is a common-sense way to protect the pediatric patients I see from unnecessary loss of coverage.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report for HB 111.

Testimony on HB111 by Steve Raabe-President-Opinio

Uploaded by: Steve Raabe

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Before the Health and Government Operations Committee

By Steve Raabe, President, OpinionWorks LLC

February 7, 2023

Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 111.

My name is Steve Raabe. I am a resident of Annapolis, and President of OpinionWorks, a public opinion research firm.

I would like to speak to the provision in this bill that would automatically establish a program to enroll people in Medicaid and the Maryland Children's Health Program based on SNAP eligibility.

I would like to share observations from past focus group work we undertook for the Maryland Citizens Health Initiative to understand remaining barriers to coverage facing people who qualify for free or low-cost healthcare but who do not apply.

I would like to speak to the mindset and barriers that we heard. Observations made by uninsured Marylanders in that inquiry, I would suggest, may also be relevant to HB111.

Participants in that study were clear they would be more likely to have health coverage if barriers to entry were removed. For example, in that project we tested the possibility of signing up for health coverage at the same time and place people apply for unemployment benefits, and participants were excited about that idea.

Let me give you just two of the most important barriers uninsured Marylanders cited.

1. Fear of an onerous application process: People admitted that their perception of a difficult process keeps them from even getting started. One person said.

I am definitely one of those people when something seems like it is taking a little bit too long, or I hit a speed bump...sometimes I get a little discouraged and I might just go into a totally different direction.

2. Just don't know the process – or don't know they're eligible: One said,

I don't know if you need to apply or what are the requirements to apply. I wanted to apply and I should have done research to find out more about it. I really don't know that part.

Based on this research, I can say confidently that this bill effectively removes key barriers to health coverage for uninsured Marylanders and will result in broader coverage.

Thank you.

LBCMD_FAV_HB111

Uploaded by: Ufuoma Agarin

Position: FAV



February 2, 2023

Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chairwoman
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Rm. 241
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Inc. has voted to offer **favorable** support for House Bill 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. **This bill is a 2023 legislative priority of the Black Caucus.**

This legislation will streamline the process by which people sign up for safety-net services such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs. By establishing categorical eligibility, one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2021, 62% of adult recipients receiving SNAP benefits identified as Black/African American. To receive assistance, Maryland’s enrollees and recipients are required to submit applications and documentations for review to the relevant State agency, and severally if applying for multiple services. The current process creates unnecessary barriers for households that have limited access to internet and/or transportation yet seek to obtain safety net services to sustain and support their most basic needs. We believe that by shifting to automatic enrollment of eligible SNAP recipients, this legislation, in effect, will better help to support Black Marylanders and households in need of safety net services, including but not limited to Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, and Energy Assistance.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports House Bill 111 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

Jheanelle Wilkins

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Chair, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

Vincent DeMarco_MHCFA_FAV_HB111.pdf

Uploaded by: Vincent DeMarco

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee

By Vincent DeMarco, President, Maryland Health Care For All! Coalition

February 7, 2023

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly, and Members of the House HGO Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support House Bill 111, which would automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP. Special thank you to Delegate Charkoudian for sponsoring this critical legislation. I am testifying on behalf of the [Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition](#) which is made up of over 300 faith, business, labor, community, and health care organizations across the state, and our mission is quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders.

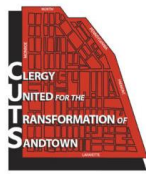
Under your leadership over 400,000 Marylanders have enrolled in health coverage since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Maryland was the first in the nation to create an Easy Enrollment program to allow Marylanders to start the enrollment process by checking a box on their state tax return, and other states are now following our example. Maryland then built on that progress by adding a similar checkbox to its unemployment insurance forms. Programs like these have led to Maryland cutting the rate of uninsured in half to six percent.

But, there is more we need to do. This legislation would help Marylanders who have already demonstrated that they are very low-income through the SNAP program by automatically enrolling them into Medicaid. Based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#), this would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity.

This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits once the public health emergency ends and Medicaid redeterminations begin again. This will reduce the number of Marylanders eligible for Medicaid who lose their coverage because of burdensome paperwork requirements, while also creating administrative savings for Maryland.

In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to energy and water assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.

Thanks to your leadership, Maryland has one of the top five health care systems in the entire nation, and HB 111 will help us continue to lead. We urge a favorable report for HB 111.



HB 111 Fact Sheet

The bill would give Maryland's Medicaid program powerful new tools to accomplish two key goals: enrolling uninsured Marylanders into health coverage for which they qualify; and preventing eligible Medicaid families from losing their health care because of needless paperwork requirements. It would achieve these goals by cutting red tape and lifting families' administrative burdens.

The bill would implement Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) to automatically grant Medicaid eligibility to children and adults whom the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has already found to have very low income. Federal law gives each state Medicaid program the option to provide ELE to children, and other have received federal waivers permitting adults to benefit from ELE.

The legislation would cover more than 60,000 uninsured Marylanders. Based on [Census Bureau data for 2021](#), 65,000 uninsured state residents receive SNAP—nearly one in five uninsured Marylanders (17%). Among the uninsured SNAP recipients benefiting from the legislation, 57,000 are people of color, including 23,000 uninsured African Americans and 28,000 uninsured Latinos. Almost 40,000 of uninsured SNAP recipients are poor or near poor, with incomes below twice the federal poverty line, so the legislation would focus resources on people who need help the most.

The bill would prevent half a million eligible Marylanders from losing Medicaid because of missing paperwork. Half of the state's Medicaid beneficiaries under age 65 (560,000 out of 1.14 million) have already been found poor enough to receive SNAP. The bill would relieve these families of the need to complete pointless paperwork to retain their health care. And because the state would redetermine their eligibility automatically, based on an exchange of computer files, rather than by paying state workers to manually analyze paperwork, the state would achieve significant administrative savings.

More than 440,000 of the Medicaid beneficiaries who would benefit from paperwork-free renewals are people of color, including 300,000 African Americans, almost 80,000 Latinos, and nearly 30,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who rely on Medicaid for health care. 70% of beneficiaries renewed based on SNAP would come from low-income families, with earnings that fall below twice the federal poverty level—again showing how the bill focuses resources on people who need help the most.

States have covered numerous uninsured by implementing ELE wisely. South Carolina and Louisiana let families consent to ELE-based Medicaid enrollment simply by using their benefits to obtain health care. As a result, more than 30,000 uninsured children in [Louisiana](#) and more than 90,000 uninsured children in [South Carolina](#) enrolled in Medicaid based on SNAP receipt, without needing to complete paperwork.

States used ELE to prevented numerous eligible families from losing health care. Under Massachusetts' federal waiver to provide adults with ELE, [only 2% to 4% of ELE families lost Medicaid at redetermination, compared to 22% to 34% of similar families not participating in ELE](#). Almost all of those in the latter group were eligible but lost health care because of missing paperwork.

States have achieved significant administrative savings by automating Medicaid renewal based on SNAP receipt. [Alabama and South Carolina each saved more than \\$1 million a year](#) in administrative costs by implementing ELE to renew Medicaid children who received SNAP. ELE accounted for more than 40% of all children's renewals in those two states.

The Biden-Harris administration has made it a top priority to eliminate administrative burdens that prevent eligible people from obtaining or retaining health care and other essential benefits. The administration has recognized that [such burdens take a particularly steep toll on families experiencing scarcity](#), imposing disproportionate harm on historically disadvantaged communities. This legislation operationalizes that aspiration, providing a highly streamlined pathway for struggling Marylanders to benefit from the essential assistance promised them under federal and state law.

HB0111_DHS_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge

Position: FWA

Date: February 7, 2023

Bill number: HB0111

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill title: **Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support and recommendation for amendment to House Bill 111 (HB 111).

The Department supports the intent of Senate Bill 26 as it would streamline eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) applications. This piece of legislation will impact two processes. First, it will make the application process for all applicants faster, streamlined, and uniform. Second, it seeks to enroll approximately 32,000 additional prospective households for the energy assistance program based on information DHS has learned from the SNAP’s caseload of households and individuals currently claiming a utility expense.

House Bill 111 addresses the income eligibility requirements for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP). The legislation would serve the citizens of Maryland in need of assistance by providing a waiver to customers in the State. It would enhance the client’s experience, cut down on processing times and administrative burdens, and extend benefits to people eligible, but not currently receiving OHEP or SNAP benefits. This piece of legislation would allow DHS to reach a broader segment across the State of Maryland.

The Department of Human Services recommends amending the language on page 4, line 19 as follows:

(II) The OFFICE SHALL ENROLL IN ANY FUEL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANY **HOUSEHOLD WITH AN** INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR A RECIPIENT OF:

The Department supports House Bill 111 if amendments are included in the Committee’s report as recommended above. The Department is grateful to offer our support and collaboration on HB 111 and requests a favorable with amendments report.



10a - X - HB 111 - HGO - MDH - LOSWA.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FWA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services – Eligibility and Enrollment – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter to support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services – Eligibility and Enrollment. MDH supports establishment of an Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) program to expedite renewal of coverage for existing Medicaid and Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP) participants, subject to budget approval.

HB 111 will require MDH to establish an Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) program to streamline and expedite enrollment of eligible individuals in the Maryland Medicaid and MCHP. The bill requires MDH to designate the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as the Express Lane Agency (ELA) to support the program and facilitate Medicaid/MCHP eligibility determinations. MDH supports HB 111 with amendments to establish an ELE program using SNAP data for renewals, consistent with the approach adopted by Massachusetts MassHealth, the state’s Medicaid Program, as described below.

Current federal statute permits state agencies to adopt the ELE option under the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA), P.L. 111-3. CHIPRA allows state Medicaid and/or CHIP agencies to use information already collected by another participating State agency to determine whether a child meets Medicaid and/or CHIP eligibility requirements for enrollment or renewal of coverage. The ELE option does not apply to adults.

In addition, President Biden recently enacted the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328), which requires all State Medicaid and CHIP agencies to provide up to 12 months of continuous eligibility for children by January 1, 2024. This federal requirement guarantees full-year Maryland Medicaid/MCHP coverage for eligible Maryland children up to age 19. MDH is reviewing system requirements for implementing this new requirement and has set a tentative target date for implementation in August 2023. Implementation of this initiative is expected to have a positive impact on enrollment for children.

MDH has been exploring the best means of implementing a SNAP-based ELE approach into the State’s eligibility system. Specifically, subject to budget approval, MDH can commit to implementing an ELE program that emulates the Massachusetts MassHealth approach. MassHealth partners with SNAP to renew coverage for members of the SNAP household up to age 65 already enrolled in Medicaid and/or CHIP through a data matching process. The SNAP eligibility decision is used to verify ongoing residency

in the state and serves as a proxy for income at renewal. Medicaid benefits are renewed based on the child's eligibility for SNAP. Parents, legal caretaker relatives, and childless adults who are part of the same household group as these children are included in this process and also have their Medicaid coverage renewed if they are eligible for SNAP.

Notably, State Medicaid agencies using the Express Lane option must still ensure that individuals enrolled in SNAP have submitted appropriate documentation to establish their status as citizens, nationals, or qualified aliens, in accordance with the applicable documentation requirements. Medicaid agencies are **not** permitted to borrow eligibility findings with respect to citizenship from an Express Lane agency. Further, in discussions with Maryland to date, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has indicated that these requirements are not subject to waiver under authorities governed by CMS. Use of SNAP data for the purpose of automatic renewals allows MassHealth to rely on citizenship/immigration documentation previously submitted at the time of initial application for Medicaid or CHIP, substantially streamlining the ELE process for consumers.

To successfully operationalize HB 111, MDH will need to develop new, appropriate data use agreements in partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), the State's administrator of SNAP. While no such agreement currently exists, MDH will coordinate with DHS to advance these efforts. Additionally, while MDH cannot reliably estimate the potential impact on revenue or expenditures, nor renewal outcomes, MDH estimates new costs will be subject to a federal match rate of 61%.

MDH stands committed to assisting children and their families with renewing their Medicaid/MCHP coverage as well as reducing administrative burden for participants. In collaboration with the DHS, this approach will help support Maryland's most vulnerable children and families and meet the interests of HB 111. If you have any questions, please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs, at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Hererra Scott'.

Laura Hererra Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Secretary

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 111

(First Reading File Bill)

On Page 2, in line 21, strike “ENROLL” and replace with “RENEW” and after “INDIVIDUALS” add “ELIGIBILITY”.

Strike lines 24 and 25.

In line 26, strike “(III)” and replace with “(II)”.

In line 31, strike “(IV)” and replace with “(III)”.

In line 32, replace “ENROLLMENT” with “RENEW”.

2023 HB111 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deborah Brocato

Position: UNF



Opposition Statement HB111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program,
And Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment
Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

We Oppose HB111

On behalf of our 200,000 followers across the state, we respectfully object to HB111. The bill is expanding eligibility and enrollment into the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Maryland Health Children's Program (MHCP) with an *Express Lane Eligibility Program* and based on "eligibility findings by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" and "may NOT consider any other income or eligibility requirements." We oppose expanding eligibility without excluding abortion funding.

The Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program (MHCP) are the two primary programs used for publicly funded reimbursements to abortion providers in Maryland. The Maryland Department of Legislative Services, in their *Analysis of the FY 2022 Maryland Executive Budget*, shows that Maryland taxpayers are forced to fund elective abortions. For the years 2018, 2019 and 2020, over \$6 million was spent each year for almost 10,000 abortions each year. In that same report, we see that for Fiscal 2020, less than 10 of the almost 10,000 abortions were due to rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

Medical Assistance Expenditures on Abortion Language attached to the Medicaid budget since 1979 authorizes the use of State funds to pay for abortions under specific circumstances. Specifically, a physician or surgeon must certify that, based on his or her professional opinion, the procedure is necessary. Similar language has been attached to the appropriation for MCHP since its advent in Fiscal 1999. Without language to prohibit abortion funding, expansion of the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and MHCP will certainly increase the number of abortions and thus the amount of taxpayer money spent on abortions.

Maryland is one of only 4 states that forces taxpayer funding of abortion. Maryland taxpayers are forced to subsidize the abortion industry through direct Maryland Medicaid reimbursements to abortion providers, through various state grants and contracts, and through pass-through funding in various state programs. Health insurance carriers are required to provide reproductive health coverage to participate with the Maryland Health Choice program. Programs involved in reproductive health policy include the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Family Planning Program, maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Children's Cabinet, Maryland Council on School Based Health Centers, Maryland for the Advancement of School Based Health, Community Health Resource Commission, Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) and Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund.



Opposition Statement HB111, page 2 of 2

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program,
And Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment
Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

Abortion is not healthcare and abortion is never medically necessary. A miscarriage is the ending of a pregnancy *after* the baby has died; an ectopic pregnancy is not a viable pregnancy and the baby cannot continue to develop. Abortion is the destruction of a developing human being and often causes physical and psychological injury to the mother. In the black community, abortion has reached epidemic proportions with half of pregnancies of Black women ending in abortion. The abortion industry has long targeted the Black community with 78% of abortion clinics located in minority communities. **Abortion is the leading killer of black lives.** See www.BlackGenocide.org.

Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. The 2023 Marist poll shows that 60% of Americans, pro-life and pro-choice, oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. 81% of Americans favor public funds being prioritized for health and family planning services that save the lives of mothers and their children including programs for improving maternal health and birth and delivery outcomes, well baby care and parenting classes.

Funding restrictions are constitutional. The Supreme Court of the United States, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* (2022), overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and held that there is no right to abortion found in the Constitution of the United States. As early as 1980 the Supreme Court affirmed in *Harris v. McRae*, that *Roe* had created a limitation on government, not a government funding entitlement. The Court ruled that the government may distinguish between abortion and other procedures in funding decisions -- noting that "*no other procedure involves the purposeful termination of a potential life*", and held that there is "*no limitation on the authority of a State to make a value judgment favoring childbirth over abortion, and to implement that judgment by the allocation of public funds.*"

For these reasons, we respectfully ask you to oppose **HB111**.

10b - X - HB 111 - HGO - MACHO - LOI.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryland State of

Position: INFO



**2023 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services – Eligibility and Enrollment
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations Committee
POSITION: Letter of Information
BILL ANALYSIS: HB 111 would require the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) program to streamline and expedite enrollment of eligible individuals in Maryland Medicaid (MA), Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP), and Social Services programs. The bill requires MDH to designate the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as the Express Lane Agency (ELA) to support the program and facilitate eligibility determination for MA/MCHP and designated social services programs.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO), the professional association of the State’s twenty-four Health Officers who oversee the State’s twenty-four local public health departments, is committed to assisting Maryland’s most vulnerable children and families with improving access to resources that support healthy outcomes, as well as reducing the administrative burden faced by these families. Current federal statute permits state agencies to adopt the ELE option under the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA), P.L. 111-3. CHIPRA allows state Medicaid/MCHP agencies to use information already collected by another participating state agency to determine whether a child meets Medicaid/MCHP eligibility requirements for enrollment or renewal of coverage.

To the limits of what state and federal budgets may allow, streamlining eligibility and reducing churn would ensure children and their families have consistent access to health services and decrease the time they spend establishing, or re-establishing, eligibility. LHDs hope that the establishment of an ELE will result in increased efficiencies in LHD staff processing of Medicaid/MCHP applications and renewals. MD had express lane eligibility over a decade ago and it was found to be effective and efficient.

While it is too early to quantify how much these efficiencies will improve administration and reduce costs, it is anticipated that the decrease in documentation requirements will offset any increases in enrollment demand and associated workload. As the benefit to local health departments is realized due to the work of other agencies, existing, or evolving, data agreements and data systems, such as MDThink, can be leveraged to automate eligibility determination and reduce labor demands as much as possible and support the inclusion of any children and/or families who may not normally access the proposed ELA.

The Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of information for HB 111. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

10c - HB 111 - HGO - MHBE - LOI.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland

Position: INFO

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – HB 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 111 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. HB 111 will require the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to establish an Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) program by January 1, 2025, and require MDH to designate the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as the express lane agency (ELA) to use eligibility findings from SNAP to expedite the determination and renewal process for children in Maryland Medicaid or Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP). The bill also authorizes MDH to apply for a federal 1115 waiver with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid in order to effectively implement an ELE program in Maryland.

MHBE is generally supportive of state-wide efforts to simplify the enrollment process for residents into health insurance coverage, and has worked with relevant state agencies to implement other programs that simplify and streamline the process. Over the last few years MHBE has partnered with the Maryland Office of the Comptroller, and more recently the Maryland Department of Labor, to implement the Easy Enrollment Programs to facilitate and streamline enrollment in health coverage for individuals who file their taxes during tax season or receive unemployment benefits at any time in the year.

The uninsured rate for Maryland children age 0-18 was 4.3 percent in 2021, accounting for around 46,000 of the 248,000 total uninsured individuals in the state.¹ ELE supports continuous coverage for children by simplifying the renewal process and reducing barriers to enrolling and re-enrolling in coverage, and could contribute to lowering the uninsured rate for Maryland children.

MHBE serves most Medicaid enrollees in the state, around 1.25 million individuals, through the Maryland Health Connection which allows residents to compare health insurance plans and determine eligibility for and enroll in public assistance programs like Medicaid and MCHP. In this role, MHBE is prepared to work with MDH and the Department of Human Services to assist with the implementation, as appropriate, of an Express Lane Eligibility program for Medicaid and MCHP enrollees in Maryland.

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, State Indicators: [Health Insurance Coverage of Children 0-18](#) (2021).



750 E. Pratt St., 6th floor
Baltimore, MD 21202
marylandhbe.com

For further discussions or questions on MHBE's potential role in implementation of HB 111, please contact Johanna Fabian-Marks, Director of Policy and Plan Management at johanna.fabian-marks@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Eberle".

Michele Eberle
Executive Director