

Testimony of Dr. William Reid
Health and Government Operations Committee
February 23, 2023

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Dr. William Reid, and I live in Frederick, Maryland. I am a leader with Progressive Maryland's Health Care Task Force and Frederick County Progressives. I am also a member of RISE Western Maryland, Resources for Immigrant Support and Empowerment. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB588, the Access to Care Act.

I urge your support for the Access to Care Act, which will allow the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to cover all Marylanders who meet the Affordable Care Act eligibility requirements, regardless of their immigration status. The Access to Care Act provides a way to address the racial disparities in our healthcare system, so allowing access to the Exchange for Marylanders of color who can't currently use it makes sense.

I am a retired veterinary staff scientist from the National Institutes of Health, and I have worked in infectious diseases research for more than thirty years. I am also a member of the Frederick County Health Department's COVID-19 testing Task Force, charged with community engagement and ensuring that our residents, especially those in vulnerable communities, have access to free COVID-19 testing.

My background, and my experiences during the pandemic, have made me keenly aware of the insufficiencies in our healthcare system, especially when it comes to meeting the needs of our neighbors who are undocumented immigrants.

I urge you to pass HB588 and support the state subsidies program for those individuals and families who will be enrolling. These subsidies will help ensure newly eligible residents register and get the medical care and attention they need when they need it.

Thank you, and I appreciate your consideration.