



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 588**

**DATE: February 23, 2023**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Cullison, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Health & Government Operations**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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### **Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)**

House Bill 588 bill requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) to submit a federal State Innovation Waiver application to CMS by July 1, 2024. The waiver application must seek to establish a Qualified Resident Enrollment Program and request federal pass-through funding to allow “qualified residents” to obtain coverage, including State premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions, through MHBE. Under the bill, qualified residents are individuals, including minor children, regardless of immigration status, who at the time of enrollment: are seeking to enroll in a qualified health plan offered through the MHBE; residing in the State; are not incarcerated, other than incarceration pending disposition of charges; and are not eligible for the federal premium tax credit, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Medicare, the Maryland Children’s Health Plan, or employer-sponsored minimum essential coverage. Contingent upon approval, MHBE must establish and implement the Qualified Resident Enrollment program. Beginning January 1, 2024, funding for the program may be made using any federal pass-through funds received under an approved federal waiver and any funds designated by the federal or State government to provide health coverage for qualified residents.

Montgomery County believes that Maryland residents who would be served by House Bill 588 should have access to health care. Montgomery County has been providing County-funded health care services to low-income, uninsured County residents through our Montgomery Cares program, Maternity Partnership Program, and Care for Kids Program for decades. Through public-private partnerships, the County programs provide primary health care services for low-income uninsured, children, adults, pregnant women and the homeless, using private pediatricians, a network of safety net clinics, obstetricians, and hospitals along with other health care providers. House Bill 588 would enable access to similar medical care and other services to residents across the state, as well as offer the Marylanders identified in the bill the peace of mind that they are covered by health insurance.

Montgomery County Government has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring residents who are not eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, or employer-sponsored coverage have access to health care through tremendous investment of County funds; we strongly encourage the State to make similar health care available to residents across the State. Montgomery County respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 588.