



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO, CHAIR
JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK, VICE-CHAIR
GABRIEL ACEVERO, TREASURER
JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY
MADELIN MARTINEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: March 3rd, 2023

RE: HB0725 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Community First Choice Program – Reimbursement of Service Providers

The MLLC supports HB0725 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Community First Choice Program – Reimbursement of Service Providers, 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0725.

Direct care pay has historically remained low due to multiple factors including under-investment in long-term care services, and intersecting legacies of sexism, racism, and xenophobia that undervalue caregiving work and those who provide it. The proposed bill would increase Medicaid medical care provider reimbursement rates and allow the increase to be specifically designated for worker wages and benefits. Among certified nursing assistants, over 90% are women and more than half are people of color.¹ Latinos make up about 10% of the nursing assistant workforce,² and almost one in four personal care assistants in the United States is an immigrant, a number that grew from 520,000 in 2005 to 860,000 workers in 2015.³ In Maryland, there are 27,180 nursing assistants and their average pay is only \$16.37 an hour.⁴ Low annual earnings result in a relatively high rate of poverty among nursing assistants: 17 percent live below the federal poverty line; and because poverty rates are high among nursing assistants, nearly 40 percent rely on some form of public assistance.⁵

HB0725 would increase the percentage reimbursement rate for providers of certain health care services under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, the Maryland Children's Health Program, and the Community First Choice Program from 4% to 10%. This would benefit direct care healthcare workers across the state who are disproportionately women of color.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0725.

¹ [U.S. Nursing Assistants Employed in Nursing Homes: Key Facts.](#) (n.d.). Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute.

² *ibid.*

³ [Filling the Care Gap: Integrating Foreign-Born Nurses and Personal Care Assistants into the Field of Long-Term Services and Supports.](#) (n.d.). The Global Ageing Network and the LeadingAge LTSS Center at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

⁴ [Maryland - May 2021 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.](#) (n.d.).

⁵ [U.S. Nursing Assistants Employed in Nursing Homes: Key Facts.](#) (n.d.). Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute.