



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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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 14th, 2023
RE: HB0025 Healthy Maryland Program

The MLLC supports HB0025 Healthy Maryland Program

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 HB0025.

Hispanics continue to have the highest uninsured rates of any racial or ethnic group within the state of Maryland. In 2019, The Kaiser Family Foundation reported the findings of The American Community Survey, which highlights that in Maryland 21.4 percent of Hispanics were uninsured, as compared to 3.8 percent for non-Hispanic whites.¹ Nationwide, noncitizens are significantly more likely than citizens to be uninsured. In 2021, one in four (25%) lawfully present immigrants and almost half (46%) of undocumented immigrants were uninsured compared to less than one in ten (8%) citizens. Noncitizens are more likely to be uninsured than citizens because they have more limited access to private coverage due to working in jobs that are less likely to provide health benefits and they face eligibility restrictions for public coverage options, including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Marketplace coverage. Those who are eligible for coverage also face a range of enrollment barriers including fear, confusion, and language and literacy challenges.² When people avoid getting treatment they risk getting sicker, leading to worse outcomes including loss of income, loss of employment, and even premature and avoidable death. A statewide single-payer system would ensure that all state residents have access to consistent and reliable health care when they need it.

HB0025 would establish the Healthy Maryland Program as a public corporation and a unit of State government to provide comprehensive universal single-payer health care services for residents of the State. The bill establishes requirements and prohibitions of the program, including eligibility, health care provider participation and payment, the creation of the Healthy Maryland Board and Healthy Maryland Public Advisory Committee, and the development of the Healthy Maryland Trust Fund. The Healthy Maryland Program is the best option as we strive for equity in our state, thus it will ensure that Latinos and immigrants get the care they need, while ensuring healthier communities for all Marylanders.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0025.

¹ [Kaiser Family Foundation. Uninsured Rates for the Nonelderly by Race/Ethnicity](#)

² [Kaiser Family Foundation. Health Coverage and Care for Immigrants. \(Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, December 2017\).](#)