



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.

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