



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: February 20, 2024

Bill Number: **SB705**

Bill Title: Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)

Committee: Senate Finance

MDOA Position: FAVORABLE

The Department of Aging (MDOA) submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 705 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act).

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) serves as Maryland's State Unit of Aging, administering federal funding for core programs, overseeing the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network at the local level that provides services, and planning for Maryland's older adult population. Pursuant to a recent Executive Order, in January 2024, MDOA launched the Longevity-Ready Maryland Initiative,¹ which will build upon existing efforts across state agencies, private and philanthropic sectors and other stakeholders to tackle real-life challenges throughout the lifespan, taking a whole-of-life and whole-of-government approach. Key goals of Longevity-Ready Maryland are for all Marylanders to afford their longer lives and enjoy increased access to healthcare and retirement needs.

This bill would give access to all people present in Maryland, regardless of their immigration status, to buy health insurance through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, a significant step forward for Maryland's collective public health. It is well-established that people with health coverage enjoy better access to care and health outcomes than those who do not. Providing this pathway for significant numbers of Maryland residents to access health insurance on the Health Benefit Exchange will put more Maryland residents on the path to longevity.

¹ More on Longevity-Ready MD Initiative available at: <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/LRM.aspx>



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For these reasons, the Department of Aging respectfully urges a favorable report for SB705. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at andrea.nunez@maryland.gov or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carmel Roques".

Carmel Roques
Secretary
Maryland Department of Aging