

SB #705 Access to Care Act

Miner L. Brown

Favorable

Sponsor: Senator Antonio Hayes

Submitted by: Miner L. (Moe) Brown, District 11B

CASA Ally & Member, Social Action Advocacy Committee

Chizuk Amuno Congregation, Pikesville, MD

This testimony is written in strong support of Bill 705, Access to Care Act. This bill solely focuses on opening access and submitting the waiver. **The passage of SB705 would allow immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to purchase health insurance plans through Maryland's insurance market.** There is **NO** expense to the State in this Bill! Thus, there is no reason that it should not to be passed this year.

The legislative leadership cannot swipe away the knowledge that there are approximately 112,400 members of our Maryland community who are uninsured for healthcare only because they are ineligible for qualified healthcare plans and Medicaid due only because they are undocumented immigrants living in Maryland. This now represents approximately 30 % of the state's total uninsured population. This is neither right or humane. At least, give those immigrants who are able to pay for health care insurance to opportunity.

There has been positive recognition of the overall benefits for noncitizen pregnant individuals and the babies for their 1st year of life to receive health care with passage of the Healthy Babies Equity Act of 2022. In addition, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHCE) and Md. Dept. of Health (MDH) were directed and have produced a Report comparing the cost of offering affordable health care for MMAP or qualified health care programs due to their immigrant status. These are good starts.

It should, however, be recognized that this above Study is incomplete as it lacks significant components of information developed and available from the organization Healthcare for All!, a Baltimore based non-for-profit organization, entitled, "Analysis of Hospital Uncompensated Care, Related Hospital Assessments, and Health Care Expansion" dealing with the unreimbursed expenses to hospitals and other health care facilities for care provided to immigrants ineligible to receive health insurance.

Once SB705/HB728 is enacted, the number of uninsured immigrants, will be reduced from the current uninsured previously ineligible for insurance at **NO** cost to the State of Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony as a concerned 83 year old voter with a professional career in hospital and long term care management.