

Bonnie Weissberg
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TESTIMONY ON SB# 705 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Health Insurance – Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)

TO: Senators Hayes and Lam Finance Committee

FROM: Bonnie Weissberg

OPENING: My name is Bonnie Weissberg. I am a resident of District 4I I am submitting this testimony in support of SB #705, The Access to Care Act.

I am a retired Medical Social Worker having worked in medical settings for 30 years in New York, California and Maryland. I feel committed to advocating for people who are disenfranchised and poor who are unable to get their own health insurance due to cost and/or circumstances. Health insurance is often linked to employment. There are many who can't get health insurance since they do not work for a company that provides health insurance or they do daily work. My values are also instilled in me as a Jewish woman. As Jewish people, we are obligated to treat others in our community as our own.

My mother and grandparents were from Russia and came to New York in 1927. My grandmother made and sold knishes. My grandfather did odd jobs. The immigrants today are here for the same reasons my family came. They are leaving untenable living situations and are trying to make successful lives for themselves and their children.

While working in health facilities, I met people who were uninsured with serious illness. The only option for them were to go to a hospital emergency room where emergency Medicaid would possibly pay for their medical emergency medical needs. If they had a chronic problem, there was no place to get care. One woman in particular, had no insurance. She had cancer and was told by the oncologist that she could get treatment to try to extend her life, but since she had no insurance, she, was destined for her life to be cut short without care. Too many immigrants are suffering from illnesses where treatment is available but only to those who can afford it or have insurance.

I believe that you should vote yes on this bill so that immigrants can have the same rights as others who are able to purchase insurance through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

Thank you for your service and caring about Maryland residents.