



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 21, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 705 – Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act) - Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 705 – Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act). The bill would require the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to establish a Qualified Resident Enrollment Program and apply for a federal waiver to implement the program, which will allow qualified residents to purchase health coverage on the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

The Department supports this important legislation. According to the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, the bill can be implemented within existing resources. The bill does not require or provide for subsidies for purchase of coverage. However, purchasing coverage on the Exchange provides many consumer benefits that are not currently available to qualified residents, including a simplified shopping experience, consumer support and translation, and allowing mixed-status families to enroll in the same plan through the Exchange.

There is ample evidence that lack of health coverage negatively impacts health, and that having health coverage is associated with improved access and outcomes. SB 705 will expand access to coverage and improve health in Maryland, and can be accomplished within existing resources.

The Department urges a favorable report on SB 705.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary