

Testimony - SB 705, Access to Care Act - Favorable
Senate Finance Committee
February 21, 2024
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Chair Beidle & Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 workers including members who come from immigrant families of mixed status. Access to healthcare remains a challenge for every resident in Maryland. Yet, those without insurance are often the most challenged. Preventive care is virtually non-existent for those without health insurance. Emergency rooms often become the primary point of care for the uninsured. Those without insurance are typically unable to afford the massive medical bills incurred out of pocket for an ER visit. This results in the State spending between \$120 - \$170 million dollars per year in uncompensated care for emergency department services for residents who do not have insurance. Higher insurance premiums, inflation of healthcare costs, and more tax dollars being spent on care that could go to fund other vital projects are the result of this situation that has a very simple fix: provide access for all residents, regardless of status, the ability to purchase health insurance on Maryland's existing marketplace.

The solutions of insurmountable problems are rarely simple, however, this is one of those moments in time where the simple solution can bring relief to so many families in Maryland.

We ask you to support SB 705 and provide a favorable report.

Thank you.