



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 21, 2024

TO: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

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

Senate Bill 705 requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) to submit a federal State Innovation Waiver application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services by July 1, 2025. The waiver application must seek to establish a Qualified Resident Enrollment Program and request available federal pass-through funding to allow “qualified residents” to obtain coverage through MHBE. Under the bill, qualified residents are individuals, including minor children, regardless of immigration status, who at the time of enrollment: are seeking to enroll in a qualified health plan offered through the MHBE; are residing in the State; are not incarcerated, other than incarceration pending disposition of charges; and are not eligible for the federal premium tax credit, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Medicare, the Maryland Children’s Health Plan, or employer-sponsored minimum essential coverage.

Montgomery County believes that Maryland residents who would be served by Senate Bill 705 should have access to health care. Montgomery County has been providing County-funded health care services to low-income, uninsured County residents through our Montgomery Cares program, Maternity Partnership Program, and Care for Kids Program for decades. Through public-private partnerships, the County programs provide primary health care services for low-income uninsured, children, adults, pregnant women and the homeless, using private pediatricians, a network of safety net clinics, obstetricians, and hospitals along with other health care providers. Senate Bill 705 would enable access to similar medical care and other services to residents across the state, as well as offer the Marylanders identified in the bill the peace of mind that they are covered by health insurance.

Montgomery County Government has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring residents who are not eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, or employer-sponsored coverage have access to health care through tremendous investment of County funds; we strongly encourage the State to make similar health care available to residents across the State. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 705.

cc: Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee