



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

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 240 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: House Bill 728 – Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act) - Support**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 728 – *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. HB 728 will expand access to coverage and improve health in Maryland, and can be accomplished within existing resources.

The Department urges a favorable report on House Bill 728.

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

Sincerely,

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