



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus  
DATE: 2/6/24  
RE: HB0728 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)

### **The MLLC supports HB0728 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act), 2024**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0728.

This bill will address the flaws and inequities in the State's healthcare system that bears financial costs for the State and Marylanders. In 2022, the State reported spending between \$120 and \$150 million in uncompensated care for undocumented immigrants.<sup>1</sup> Because these individuals do not have access to primary or preventative health care, a majority of their health needs are treated in emergency rooms. This bill would serve as a significant cost saving benefit to the state's health care system. Several sources find Maryland to be one of the top 10 states with the longest emergency room lines, with one study in 2023 finding that Maryland was the state with the longest emergency room wait times in the country. Ensuring that all residents have access to primary and preventative care could significantly decrease these wait times.

This bill will ensure that residents of Maryland that are working and paying taxes have the opportunity to access the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) and have a chance to pay for health care insurance. This bill benefits individuals, families, and is in the best interest of the state, as it requires no state subsidies. It will require that the MHBE request a 1332 waiver to allow Maryland residents to purchase insurance on the Exchange regardless of their immigration status. With access to the Exchange, individuals would have the opportunity to compare insurance plans in their own language using technology to help find a plan that best meets the needs of their family.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0728.

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<sup>1</sup> [Health care bill for immigrants appears to be stalling in state Senate - Maryland Matters](#)