masbhc
MARYLAND ASSEMBLY ON
SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CARE
education+health=success

Committee:	**House Health and Government Operations Committee**
Bill Number:	**HB 728 – Health Insurance – Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)**
Hearing Date:	**February 8, 2024**
Position:	**Support**

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) strongly supports *House Bill 728 – Health Insurance – Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)*. The bill will allow individuals who are undocumented to purchase insurance from the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange using their own earnings.

There are almost 90 school-based health centers serving underserved communities from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. School-based health centers provide primary, behavioral, and oral health services to children who are uninsured or enrolled in Medicaid.

Under the current law, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange will only cover the portion of the family who have legal status:

Health Insurance for Immigrant Families in Maryland

> *"Marylanders who are present in the U.S. under certain immigration statuses or have applied for certain lawfully present statuses may be eligible to enroll in a private health plan through Maryland Health Connection."*[i]

As a result, many children live in families with fragmented insurance coverage. The children may have coverage through MCHP or a qualified health plan if they were born in the U.S., but the parents cannot even purchase an Exchange plan.

In our experience, children benefit when the parents have insurance coverage. In families with coverage, children are far more likely to have a medical home, obtain regular preventative services, and obtain the wellness visits and vaccinations needed for entry into school.

This legislation makes fiscal sense. Families will use their own earnings to purchase coverage, and all member, including the children, will benefit with greater access to preventative visits. We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

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[i] https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/health-coverage/immigrant-families/