

Access to Care Act / HB 728
Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 6, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Walsh, and I'm a resident of Anne Arundel County. I am writing today in support of House Bill 728 - the Access to Care Act.

I believe that healthcare is a human right and that everyone, no matter their immigration status, should be able to have access to the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and the opportunity to pay for health insurance. We all benefit when our residents have health coverage. People live longer, children get the health services and care they need, and families don't have to face serious health and financial insecurity.

Reducing the state's uninsured population benefits everyone. It means we will spend less money on ER care and uncompensated care. Most importantly, more people will get routine, preventive care. This will help more workers and families to lead healthier, less stressful lives.

Passing practical and valuable legislation aligns with my values and with the values that this Committee and the House have consistently upheld: treating all people with dignity, supporting every Marylander's access to basic necessities and public goods, ensuring racial and gender equity in our healthcare system, and lowering the percentage of Marylanders without health coverage.

I hope you will support this critical legislation and urge your colleagues in the House to do the same. I respectfully urge this committee to fight for all of Maryland's people by issuing a favorable report with NO weakening amendments on HB 694.

Sincerely,

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