



Maryland State Perfusion Society

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 728 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program

(Access to Care Act)

Hearing Date: February 8, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland State Perfusion Society (MSPS) supports House Bill 728 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act). The bill requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and the Department of Health to seek a federal waiver that, when granted, would allow undocumented immigrants to participate in the health care programs on the Exchange. This was initially prohibited under the Affordable Care Act, but states are now seeking ways to ensure that all residents have access to the lower cost plans available on the exchange which is expected to decompress emergency departments.

MSPS is a non-profit society of licensed perfusionists who specialize in operating the heart-lung machine during open-heart surgeries, and several other lifesaving surgeries and procedures; e.g, Liver transplantation, ExVivo Organ Perfusion, Hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy, etc. Perfusionist maintain viability at the cellular level keeping tissue, organs and entire patients alive by means of perfusion circuitry. This is performed by the circulation of blood and oxygen in careful combination with medications to the patient's tissue beds while the heart is temporarily stopped or bypassed. Perfusionists are trained to monitor the patient's vitals and laboratory tests, making adjustments to the heart-lung machine as needed to ensure all patient tissues are perfused while undergoing heart/lung bypass surgery, ExtraCorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO, or life support for end stage ARDS and critically ill COVID patients).

Maryland has worked hard to provide health insurance coverage to its residents, resulting in an uninsured rate of approximately six percent. However, for those still without coverage, they face uncertainty and too often receive care in settings inappropriate for their condition, such as emergency departments, or only after their condition has worsened and more expensive and invasive treatment is necessary. Access to primary care and other health care services will ensure that our undocumented immigrant children, youth, and adults live better, and healthier lifestyles that will help our communities.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at mpaddy@policypartners.net.