

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), our mission is to champion justice and equity for all, particularly for our Latino communities. House Bill 547, which mandates hospital price transparency and prohibits the sale of personal data collected through online price estimator tools, resonates deeply with our commitment to health equity and the protection of individual rights.

In our work, we've seen firsthand how opaque healthcare pricing can deter individuals, especially those from underserved communities, from seeking necessary medical care. The uncertainty of costs often leads to delayed treatments or avoidance of care altogether, exacerbating health disparities. By requiring hospitals to maintain and make available a list of standard charges for shoppable services, HB547 empowers patients with the information they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Moreover, the prohibition against selling personal data collected through online price estimator tools is a crucial safeguard. Trust is foundational in the patient-provider relationship. Knowing that their personal information won't be exploited for targeted advertising or other purposes ensures that patients can seek care without fear of privacy violations.

For many in the Latino community, language barriers, economic challenges, and historical injustices have created a complex web of obstacles in accessing healthcare. Transparent pricing demystifies one aspect of this system, allowing families to plan and prioritize their health needs without the looming fear of unexpected expenses.

By supporting HB547, we take a meaningful step toward a more just healthcare system—one where all Marylanders, regardless of background, have the clarity and confidence to seek the care they deserve. This bill aligns with our shared values of transparency, respect, and equity.

We urge the House Health and Government Operations Committee to consider the profound positive impact this legislation will have on our communities. Together, let's advance a healthcare environment that upholds the dignity and rights of every individual.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.  
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