



HB 417 Public Health - Commission on Universal Health Care

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: February 4th, 2025

Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair and Members of the HGO Committee,

Thank you for holding a Committee hearing on HB 417. We also want to express our thanks to Delegate Ruth and all of the House co-sponsors.

Progressive Maryland is a statewide, non-profit, community organizing and advocacy group. Our 17,000 individual members, 5 chapters and allied organizations help to lead and develop our health justice campaigns. We also collaborate with our national affiliate, People's Action, on the Care Over Cost campaign - the grassroots fight to end health insurance care and claim denials.

We support a single payer universal healthcare system that ensures everyone is in, no one is out; that ensures people get healthcare when they need it. Where no one is denied care.

Tens of thousands of Marylanders and tens of millions Americans also support such a system.

Local governments would also benefit by moving away from an expensive, patchwork system that drains their budgets and depletes their resources. In the past six years the County Councils in Anne Arundel, Prince George's and Montgomery passed resolutions in support of Medicare For All. The cities of Annapolis, Baltimore and Frederick have done the same. These jurisdictions realize how much time and money and aggravation they would save if we moved to a public system.

We owe it to ourselves to understand all the savings and health care services that a single payer system could provide to our state, a very relevant point given the budget challenges that we're facing this year.

As you know, insurance premiums, co-pays and deductibles are going up year after year. Provider networks are shrinking and more of us have to seek care with more expensive "Out of

Network” providers . The crisis in healthcare claim and care denials has exacerbated all the shortcomings in our current system. When we’re out talking to people on their doorsteps they often ask “what good is it to have an insurance policy if I can’t really use it? “

Given all of these conditions the time is right for our state to exert more control and more say in how healthcare works in our state. HB 417 gives our state the opportunity to explore a public option over a period of three years. Please support this bill and send it to the full House.

Marylanders deserve a system that makes healthcare a right, not a commodity controlled by private equity and Wall Street interests.

Sincerely.

Patty Snee, PM Lead Health Care Issue Campaigns

patty@progressivemaryland.org

301 655-5682