



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: February 6, 2025

RE: HB417 - Public Health – Commission on Universal Health Care

### **The MLLC supports HB417 - Public Health – Commission on Universal Health Care, 2025.**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB417.

House Bill 417 establishes the Commission on Universal Health Care in Maryland to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a state-run universal health care program through a single-payer system. The commission's mandate includes exploring ways to provide comprehensive, affordable, and high-quality health care coverage for all state residents, regardless of income, immigration status, or existing coverage. It will study healthcare equity, access in underserved urban and rural areas, and strategies to reduce disparities. The commission will also develop cost projections, recommend financing mechanisms, and explore innovative approaches to reduce costs, such as global payment models and administrative expense reduction.

This bill addresses critical health care access disparities, including those affecting immigrant communities. Latinos, especially immigrants, are underinsured at significantly higher rates than U.S.-born individuals, leaving many without essential health services. The proposed Commission would study the feasibility of a single-payer system that guarantees comprehensive health coverage for all Maryland residents, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Importantly, the commission includes representation from organizations that assist immigrants, ensuring that the needs and perspectives of Latino and immigrant communities are considered. By prioritizing equity and inclusivity, this bill offers an opportunity to address systemic barriers in healthcare access and improve the well-being of Maryland's Latino population.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB417.