



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1126 – Health Insurance and Managed Care
Organizations – Laboratory Services – Contract Providers – FAVORABLE**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Qi

Committee: Health

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in support of HB1126 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to ensure that state policy protects people’s lives, health, and dignity, especially by ensuring Marylanders can access timely, accurate, and affordable diagnostic testing without unnecessary administrative barriers.

HB1126 strengthens that commitment by prohibiting carriers and managed care organizations from restricting an enrollee’s ability to select a laboratory of their choice, as long as the laboratory agrees to comply with the plan’s standard terms. The bill also prohibits carriers and managed care organizations from denying a qualified laboratory the right to participate in a health benefit plan and from imposing additional copayments, fees, or conditions on laboratory services provided to an enrollee.

These protections are urgently needed.

Diagnostic laboratory testing is foundational to medical care. It informs diagnoses, guides treatment decisions, and ensures that patients receive the right care at the right time. **When insurers restrict which laboratories patients may use, or impose additional fees or administrative hurdles, patients face delays, increased costs, and reduced access to essential services.** HB1126 closes these gaps by ensuring that:

- Patients retain the freedom to choose a laboratory that meets their needs.

- Qualified laboratories cannot be excluded from participation without cause.
- Carriers cannot impose extra fees or conditions that make lab services harder to access.
- Providers can refer patients to the most appropriate laboratory without insurer interference.

These measures create a more transparent, patient-centered system that supports timely and equitable access to diagnostic care.

HB1126 also has significant implications for healthcare access and equity. Laboratory restrictions disproportionately affect patients in rural areas, low-income communities, and communities of color, where fewer in-network labs may be available. Additional fees or conditions can deter patients from obtaining necessary tests, leading to delayed diagnoses, worsening health outcomes, and higher long-term healthcare costs. By ensuring that insurer policies do not limit access to laboratories, HB1126 helps reduce disparities and strengthens Maryland's commitment to equitable, high-quality care.

This bill aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It promotes fairness, transparency, and patient autonomy within Maryland's healthcare system. No Marylander should face barriers to essential diagnostic testing because of restrictive insurance practices or arbitrary limitations on laboratory participation.

We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1126.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Gorski
Executive Committee
Maryland Legislative Coalition