

Bill Title: HB1316 - Public Health – Universal Health Care Program – Study and Commission

Position: FAVORABLE

To: House Health Committee

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and other Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Yvette Delph and I am a retired physician and health researcher living in Silver Spring, District 19. I am a member of Progressive Maryland's Health Care Task Force. I respectfully request your support of HB1316, requiring the Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing a single-payer universal health care program in the State; and establishing the Advisory Commission on Universal Health Care to assist in the development of final findings and recommendations.

I worked for 15 years as a physician in Barbados, which has a government-provided comprehensive healthcare system for all residents. There, I never had to ask a patient about their health insurance coverage before caring for them or determining what treatments or medications I should prescribe. I was free to focus on providing my patients with the care they needed, and I did not have to fight with insurance companies over my patients' need for that care. Patients never received an invoice for their government-provided healthcare. It boggles my mind that we continue to pay more for healthcare with worse health outcomes than other high-income countries which have national or single-payer healthcare systems.

Our healthcare system is severely broken, denies needed care, is hugely expensive, poorly distributed geographically, and produces inadequate and disparate health outcomes, with our most vulnerable experiencing the worst outcomes. And it is getting worse! In the face of continually escalating health insurance company profiteering and denials of care, soaring costs of health insurance and healthcare, increasing loss of rural health facilities, and rising utilization of emergency services as the only source of healthcare, we need viable solutions.

The Hilltop Institute study will provide us with objective data on other single-payer healthcare systems; cost projections for a single-payer system; and information on improving health coverage, access to care, equity, and outcomes for all Marylanders. The final report, due by June 1, 2029, will make recommendations on an operational structure for the single-payer system, as well as the transition from or integration of existing healthcare systems. Colorado enacted similar legislation (SB25-045) on May 14, 2025 and the University of Colorado has already raised the requisite \$750,000 through private (non-state) donations to conduct their analyses. This Hilltop Institute study is not only absolutely necessary for Maryland, it is feasible through private funding.

I strongly urge you to give favorable consideration to HB1316—a sound approach that will provide a carefully considered path to the goal of quality healthcare at an affordable cost, which all Marylanders deserve.

Sincerely,

Yvette Delph, MBBS, DA
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