



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1316 – Public Health – Universal Health Care Program
– Study and Commission – FAVORABLE**

**Bill Sponsors: Delegates Ruth, Allen, Behler, Ebersole, Fair, Lehman,
McCaskill, Palakovich Carr, Terrasa, and Woorman**

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 strong support of HB1316 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 when it comes to ensuring that every Marylander can access affordable, comprehensive, and equitable healthcare.

HB1316 strengthens that commitment by requiring the Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing a universal health care program in Maryland through a single-payer system. The bill also establishes the Advisory Commission on Universal Health Care to assist the Institute in developing final findings and recommendations.

Maryland's healthcare system remains fragmented, costly, and difficult to navigate. Too many Marylanders, particularly low-income residents, people of color, individuals with chronic conditions, and those living in rural areas; face barriers to accessing timely, affordable care. Rising premiums, high deductibles, gaps in coverage, and administrative complexity all contribute to inequities in health outcomes and financial strain for families.

HB1316 recognizes that meaningful reform requires a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of what a universal, single-payer system could look like in Maryland. The study mandated by this bill will:

- Evaluate the feasibility, costs, and potential savings of a universal health care program.
- Examine how a single-payer model could improve access, reduce disparities, and streamline care.
- Assess impacts on patients, providers, employers, and the State.
- Identify administrative structures and financing mechanisms needed for implementation.
- Provide policymakers with clear, data-driven recommendations.

These measures ensure that Maryland's approach to healthcare reform is grounded in rigorous analysis rather than speculation.

HB1316 also has significant implications for healthcare access and equity. A universal, single-payer system has the potential to eliminate coverage gaps, reduce out-of-pocket costs, and ensure that every Marylander can access preventive care, behavioral health services, prescription drugs, and specialty care without financial barriers. By studying these possibilities, Maryland takes an important step toward a system where healthcare is treated as a public good rather than a privilege tied to employment or income.

This bill aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It promotes equity, strengthens public health, and ensures that Maryland is prepared to make informed decisions about the future of its healthcare system. No Marylander should go without care because they cannot afford it, cannot navigate the system, or fall into the gaps between programs.

We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1316.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Gorski
Executive Committee
Maryland Legislative Coalition