

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

Position: Support (FAVORABLE)

To: House Health Committee

From: Donna Ticknor, MD, Riva, MD 21140, District 33B

Date: 03/10/2026

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Donna Ticknor. I am a resident of District 33B, Anne Arundel County. I have been a resident in Riva, Maryland for 8 years and previously a resident in Bowie, Maryland for 20 years. I practice medicine throughout the State of Maryland and have been a practicing physician for over 25 years. I am writing in support of HB1316 and request your strong support. We urgently need this legislation and this Commission.

As a practicing physician and mental health clinician, I see the tolls of our broken healthcare system in my patients' lives every day. Patients lose their health insurance frequently due to factors outside of their control and even more commonly, patients face under-insurance and have difficulty accessing care due to poor provider networks, large deductibles, limited medications on formularies and difficulty navigating a complex healthcare system.

Lack of adequate provider networks are particularly a problem for patients seeking mental health care. Due to poor reimbursement rates, lack of enforcement of mental health parity, lack of coverage for evidence-based treatments such as DBT, many mental health clinicians in Maryland have chosen to opt out of insurance networks. I am also deeply concerned about the increasing rate of burnout and moral injury in physicians which lead to clinicians leaving the profession. PNHP is releasing their comprehensive report on the impact of Moral Injury this month. <https://pnhp.org/understanding-moral-injury-in-health-care/>

Our state and our country are in the throes of a healthcare crisis, thanks in part to the actions of the Republican controlled Congress and due to decades of insurance industry profiteering. Insurance companies are making record profits, spending our premium dollars on stock buybacks and to fund sky high CEO compensation packages, all while they raise our premiums and deny our claims.

According to Wendell Potter's February 24th HEALTH CARE un-covered post:

The seven largest for-profit health insurance conglomerates took in nearly \$1.7 trillion from their customers in 2025 (\$175 billion more than in 2024) and they booked more than \$54 billion in profits.

https://open.substack.com/pub/healthcareuncovered/p/big-insurance-earnings-2025-stock?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email

Moving to a truly universal single payer health care system where everyone is in, no one is left out, that centers the needs of patients and practitioners, and ensures that more of each dollar we spend is going to actual care makes sense. There's also broad public support for adopting

improved Medicare For All according to recent polls. Six Members of our Congressional delegation, including Sen. Van Hollen, are sponsors of the federal Medicare For All Act.

HB1316 will give the state a chance to analyze the numbers and the financial model that could support such a move. Colorado passed a similar measure last year and has raised the money to fund the financial analysis. HB1316 will establish the Commission on Universal Health Care to determine the feasibility of establishing a State universal health care program to provide health benefits to all residents of the State through a single-payer system. This will give us real and up to date data that can inform the state's decision.

Given the worsening state of our health insurance system, this Commission and its mission are needed now more than ever. Please vote to advance HB1316 and urge your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Ticknor, MD
Riva, Maryland, Anne Arundel County, District 33B

Licensed to practice medicine in Maryland and DC
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Committee to Protect Public Mental Health, Vice Chair