

HOUSE BILL 728

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CF SB 705

By: **Delegates Cullison, Acevero, Boafó, Boyce, Charkoudian, Embry, Fair, Fennell, Fraser–Hidalgo, Guzzone, Harris, Healey, Kaiser, Kerr, Lehman, R. Lewis, J. Long, Lopez, Love, Martinez, McCaskill, Mireku–North, Palakovich Carr, Patterson, Queen, Ruth, Simpson, Solomon, Spiegel, Stein, Taveras, Terrasa, Turner, White Holland, Williams, and Ziegler**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2024

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Health Insurance – Qualified Resident Enrollment Program**
3 **(Access to Care Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to establish and
5 implement the Qualified Resident Enrollment Program to facilitate the enrollment
6 of qualified residents in qualified plans; providing that the operation and
7 administration of the Program may include functions delegated by the Maryland
8 Exchange to a third party; providing that the implementation of the Program is
9 contingent on approval of a certain waiver application amendment; and generally
10 relating to the Qualified Resident Enrollment Program.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
12 Article – Insurance
13 Section 31–101(a) and 31–108(a)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Insurance
18 Section 31–101(u–1), 31–123, and 31–124
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
22 Article – Insurance
23 Section 31–107, 31–108(b)(1), and 31–115(b)(7)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2017 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Insurance

31–101.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

**(U–1) “QUALIFIED RESIDENT” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING A MINOR,
REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, WHO AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT:**

**(1) IS SEEKING TO ENROLL IN A QUALIFIED PLAN OFFERED TO
INDIVIDUALS THROUGH THE EXCHANGE;**

(2) RESIDES IN THE STATE;

**(3) IS NOT INCARCERATED, OTHER THAN INCARCERATION PENDING
DISPOSITION OF CHARGES; AND**

**(4) IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE FEDERAL PREMIUM TAX CREDIT, THE
MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, MEDICARE, THE MARYLAND
CHILDREN’S HEALTH PLAN, OR EMPLOYER–SPONSORED MINIMUM ESSENTIAL
COVERAGE.**

31–107.

(a) There is a Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund.

(b) (1) The purpose of the Fund is to:

(i) provide funding for the operation and administration of the
Exchange in carrying out the purposes of the Exchange under this subtitle;

(ii) provide funding for the establishment and operation of the State
Reinsurance Program authorized under this subtitle;

(iii) provide funding for the Medical Assistance Program and the
Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program;

(iv) provide funding for the establishment and operation of Health
Equity Resource Communities under Title 20, Subtitle 14 of the Health – General Article;
and

1 (v) provide funding for the establishment and operation of the
2 State-Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program authorized under this
3 subtitle.

4 (2) The operation and administration of the Exchange, the State
5 Reinsurance Program, [and] the State-Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies
6 Pilot Program, **AND THE QUALIFIED RESIDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM** may include
7 functions delegated by the Exchange to a third party under law or by contract.

8 (c) The Exchange shall administer the Fund.

9 (d) (1) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7-302 of
10 the State Finance and Procurement Article.

11 (2) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the
12 Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

13 (e) The Fund consists of:

14 (1) any user fees or other assessments collected by the Exchange;

15 (2) all revenue deposited into the Fund that is received from the
16 distribution of the premium tax under § 6-103.2 of this article;

17 (3) income from investments made on behalf of the Fund;

18 (4) interest on deposits or investments of money in the Fund;

19 (5) money collected by the Board as a result of legal or other actions taken
20 by the Board on behalf of the Exchange or the Fund;

21 (6) money donated to the Fund;

22 (7) money awarded to the Fund through grants;

23 (8) any pass-through funds received from the federal government under a
24 waiver approved under § 1332 of the Affordable Care Act;

25 (9) any funds designated by the federal government to provide reinsurance
26 to carriers that offer individual health benefit plans in the State;

27 (10) any funds designated by the State to provide reinsurance to carriers
28 that offer individual health benefit plans in the State;

29 (11) any funds designated by the State to provide State-based health
30 insurance subsidies to young adults in the State;

1 (12) any federal funds received in accordance with § 31–121 of this subtitle
2 for the administration of small business tax credits; and

3 (13) any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the
4 Fund.

5 (f) (1) The Fund may be used only:

6 (i) 1. for the operation and administration of the Exchange in
7 carrying out the purposes authorized under this subtitle;

8 2. for the establishment and operation of the State
9 Reinsurance Program; and

10 3. for appropriations to the Health Equity Resource
11 Community Reserve Fund under § 20–1407 of the Health – General Article;

12 (ii) in fiscal years 2021 and 2022, for the Medical Assistance
13 Program within the Medical Care Programs Administration of the Maryland Department
14 of Health;

15 (iii) in fiscal year 2022, for the Senior Prescription Drug Assistance
16 Program established under Title 15, Subtitle 10 of the Health – General Article; and

17 (iv) for the establishment and operation of the State–Based Young
18 Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program.

19 (2) In each of fiscal years 2023 through 2025, the Governor shall:

20 (i) transfer \$15,000,000 to the Health Equity Resource Community
21 Reserve Fund; and

22 (ii) include the funds transferred in accordance with item (i) of this
23 paragraph in the annual budget bill as an appropriation to the Health Equity Resource
24 Community Reserve Fund under § 20–1407 of the Health – General Article.

25 (g) (1) The Board shall maintain separate accounts within the Fund for
26 Exchange operations, for the State Reinsurance Program, and for the State–Based Young
27 Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program.

28 (2) Accounts within the Fund shall contain the money that is intended to
29 support the purpose for which each account is designated.

30 (3) Funds received from the distribution of the premium tax under §
31 6–103.2 of this article shall be placed in the account for Exchange operations and may be
32 used only for the purpose of funding the operation and administration of the Exchange.

1 (4) The following funds may be used only for the purposes of funding the
2 State Reinsurance Program:

3 (i) any pass-through funds received from the federal government
4 under a waiver approved under § 1332 of the Affordable Care Act to provide reinsurance to
5 carriers that offer individual health benefit plans in the State;

6 (ii) any funds designated by the federal government to provide
7 reinsurance to carriers that offer individual health benefit plans in the State;

8 (iii) any funds designated by the State to provide reinsurance to
9 carriers that offer individual health benefit plans in the State; and

10 (iv) except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, funds received
11 from the distribution of the assessment under § 6–102.1 of this article.

12 (h) (1) Expenditures from the Fund for the purposes authorized by this
13 subtitle may be made only:

14 (i) with an appropriation from the Fund approved by the General
15 Assembly in the State budget; or

16 (ii) by the budget amendment procedure provided for in Title 7,
17 Subtitle 2 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

18 (2) Notwithstanding § 7–304 of the State Finance and Procurement Article,
19 if the amount of the distribution from the premium tax under § 6–103.2 of this article
20 exceeds in any State fiscal year the actual expenditures incurred for the operation and
21 administration of the Exchange, funds in the Exchange operations account from the
22 premium tax that remain unspent at the end of the State fiscal year shall revert to the
23 General Fund of the State.

24 (3) If operating expenses of the Exchange may be charged to either State
25 or non-State fund sources, the non-State funds shall be charged before State funds are
26 charged.

27 (i) (1) The State Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same
28 manner as other State money may be invested.

29 (2) Any investment earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

30 (3) Except as provided in subsection (h)(2) of this section, no part of the
31 Fund may revert or be credited to the General Fund or any special fund of the State.

32 (j) A debt or an obligation of the Fund is not a debt of the State or a pledge of
33 credit of the State.

1 31-108.

2 (a) On or before January 1, 2014, the functions and operations of the Exchange
3 shall include at a minimum all functions required by § 1311(d)(4) of the Affordable Care
4 Act.

5 (b) In compliance with § 1311(d)(4) of the Affordable Care Act, the Exchange
6 shall:

7 (1) make qualified plans available to qualified individuals, **QUALIFIED**
8 **RESIDENTS**, and qualified employers;

9 31-115.

10 (b) To be certified as a qualified health plan, a health benefit plan shall:

11 (7) be in the interest of qualified individuals, **QUALIFIED RESIDENTS**, and
12 qualified employers, as determined by the Exchange;

13 **31-123.**

14 (A) **ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, THE EXCHANGE, IN CONSULTATION WITH**
15 **THE COMMISSIONER AND AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD, SHALL SUBMIT A STATE**
16 **INNOVATION WAIVER APPLICATION AMENDMENT UNDER § 1332 OF THE**
17 **AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TO ESTABLISH A QUALIFIED RESIDENT ENROLLMENT**
18 **PROGRAM AND SEEK FEDERAL PASS-THROUGH FUNDING RESULTING FROM THE**
19 **IMPLEMENTATION OF A QUALIFIED RESIDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM.**

20 (B) **ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2025, THE COMMISSIONER MAY WAIVE**
21 **ANY NOTIFICATION OR OTHER REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO A CARRIER UNDER**
22 **THIS ARTICLE IN CALENDAR YEAR 2025 DUE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A WAIVER**
23 **APPROVED UNDER § 1332 OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.**

24 **31-124.**

25 (A) **THE EXCHANGE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMISSIONER AND AS**
26 **APPROVED BY THE BOARD, SHALL ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A QUALIFIED**
27 **RESIDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM:**

28 (1) **TO FACILITATE THE ENROLLMENT OF QUALIFIED RESIDENTS IN**
29 **QUALIFIED PLANS;**

30 (2) **THAT, AS NECESSARY, MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF A WAIVER**
31 **APPROVED UNDER § 1332 OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT; AND**

1 **(3) THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW.**

2 **(B) THE QUALIFIED RESIDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM SHALL BE**
3 **DESIGNED TO MAKE INDIVIDUAL MARKET INSURANCE COVERAGE OFFERED**
4 **THROUGH THE EXCHANGE AVAILABLE TO QUALIFIED RESIDENTS.**

5 **(C) (1) THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALIFIED RESIDENT**
6 **ENROLLMENT PROGRAM SHALL BE CONTINGENT ON APPROVAL FROM THE U.S.**
7 **SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE U.S. SECRETARY OF THE**
8 **TREASURY OF A STATE INNOVATION WAIVER APPLICATION AMENDMENT UNDER §**
9 **1332 OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.**

10 **(2) WITHIN 6 MONTHS BEFORE A FISCAL YEAR IN WHICH THE**
11 **EXCHANGE IMPLEMENTS THE QUALIFIED RESIDENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM, THE**
12 **EXCHANGE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE**
13 **WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON ITS PLAN TO IMPLEMENT**
14 **THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING:**

15 **(I) THE AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF THE FUNDING FOR THE**
16 **PROGRAM;**

17 **(II) THE PARAMETERS OF THE PROGRAM;**

18 **(III) THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ANTICIPATED TO BE**
19 **ASSISTED THROUGH THE PROGRAM; AND**

20 **(IV) IF THE EXCHANGE IS AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE SUBSIDIES**
21 **UNDER THE PROGRAM, THE PARAMETERS OF THE SUBSIDIES.**

22 **(D) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2026, THE EXCHANGE SHALL ADOPT**
23 **REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.**

24 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
25 October 1, 2024.