

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Katie Fry Hester

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 1, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 59 – *Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Small Employers – Special Enrollment Period and Marketing*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 59: *Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Small Employers – Special Enrollment Period and Marketing*. This bill temporarily increases funding for the operations of the Exchange from \$32 million to \$37 million for the period between Fiscal Years 2025-2029 and allows, during that same time, \$5 million of it to be for marketing efforts to small employers. The bill also establishes a special enrollment period for individuals who become employed by a small employer that does not have an employer-sponsored health plan.

During the 2022 Session, the General Assembly passed, and Senate Bill 632 was enacted, which required the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) to convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding, among other things, the health insurance coverage needs of small employers, nonprofit employers, and their employees. As part of that report, the workgroup recommended that the General Assembly allocate additional funding for a set period of time for MHBE to invest in training, marketing, and outreach to educate small employers and their employees on their health insurance options.

MedChi supports the goal of Senate Bill 59, which is to ensure that individuals have access to health care insurance during all stages of employment. Access to health insurance is key to ensuring that individuals can continue to comply with treatment plans and seek necessary primary care before it becomes emergent. Working to educate and market information to small employers to ensure access to health insurance furthers the State's population goals, especially the early detection and intervention of diabetes. As such, we urge a favorable vote.