



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: February 2, 2021

RE: HB463 Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

### **The MLLC supports HB463 Maryland Health Equity Resource Act.**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB463.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latino community faced severe health disparities. Nationwide, Latinos experience [high rates](#) of diabetes, cirrhosis, and chronic kidney disease. In our current health crisis, Latinos across the [country](#) and in [Maryland](#) are experiencing high infection, hospitalizations, and death rates. The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated and shed a brighter light on the existing health disparities people of color confront everyday.

Latino communities are impacted by [neighborhood conditions](#) that contribute to their poor health outcomes. The lack of adequate services in certain areas perpetuate health disparities and unhealthy lives for many Marylanders. Communities across Maryland would benefit from an increase of urgently needed resources that would provide better access to health care. There are health professionals who are already committed to providing care to underserved communities. It will be impactful to put resources into areas, populations, and providers that will make a difference.

HB463 creates and funds Health Equity Resource Communities (HERC) in various Maryland areas with poor health outcomes and by using State resources their purpose will be to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes and access to primary care, promote prevention services, and reduce health care costs and hospital admissions and readmissions. It also authorizes incentives, such as grants, income tax credits and loan repayment assistance for health care practitioners or community health workers that practice in an HERC. The legislature can direct services and resources to Marylanders that need them the most. Our state has made incredible advances in healthcare access already. This legislation is another advance that will make healthcare more equitable.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB463.