



**END MEDICAL DEBT**  
**MARYLAND**



## **HB 694 - FAVORABLE**

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

To Chair Pendergrass and the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Sama Bellomo, and I'm a resident of Baltimore City and the owner of Patient Providers, a navigation and advocacy agency. I am a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition, and I support House Bill 694.

**People like me forgo hospital care to avoid the ruin of an incalculable financial risk.** Out of fear and exhaustion we pay bills that should never have been sent. We can't all read them; we are not equipped to investigate or appeal.

Maryland is egregiously under-staffed in benefits counselors and outreach coordinators who can help protect from these errors. Meanwhile, hospitals are off the hook for making sure their providers aren't billing improperly; **the onus is on the patient regardless of their outcome or ability to contest the charges.**

**HB 694 protects Marylanders and their families who never financially recover from even a minor sickness that catastrophically impacts their finances. It gives hospitals the chance to do their part** in making care available so that people don't suffer a lifetime of illness or injury from what one proper hospital visit could have mitigated.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by issuing a **favorable report with no weakening amendments on HB 694.**

Sincerely,

Sama Bellomo  
President, Patient Providers, LLC

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