



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 694**  
Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement  
Health and Government Operations Committee

Kony Serrano, On Behalf of CASA

March 2, 2022

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melynk and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to provide support for HB694 Medical Bill Reimbursement. CASA is the largest membership-based immigrant services and advocacy organization in the mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and brown immigrants and working families.

HB694 responds to the shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who *should have received free medical care* in both 2017 and 2018. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this very committee in 2020.

Immigrant families have worked on the frontlines during the pandemic with 250K of them being excluded from healthcare programs due to their immigration status. Families often turn to the emergency rooms when facing life or death situations and leave with high bills that often put their families at risk of losing income for food and housing. This bill would be the first step to holding hospitals accountable for violating their commitment to offer financial assistance to patients whose income falls under a certain threshold.

CASA respectfully urges this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by **issuing a favorable report with NO weakening amendments on HB 694.**

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CASA