



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Health and Government Operations Committee

Testimony on: HB0694 – Hospitals – Financial Assistance – Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 2, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. Equity must be restored when Maryland hospitals are failing in their legal obligation to provide financial assistance to low-income patients.

HB0694 responds to the shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who should have received free medical care in 2017 and 2018. This money needs to be returned to these low-income Marylanders who were robbed by the hospitals that were supposed to care for them.

HB0694 will require the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission, the Office of the Comptroller, and the Department of Human Services to:

- develop a process for identifying patients who qualified for free medical care in 2017 and 2018 but were made to pay toward a hospital bill. Patients are not required to prove their eligibility.
- notify the patients by mail that they are eligible for reimbursement from their hospital.
- give the patients instructions for how to request their refund.

HB0694 will require the hospitals to reimburse patients who have made claims, moving the whole system one step closer to accountability. If enough patients file for reimbursement through this process, it will trigger an inquiry into hospital debt collection practices for 2019, 2020, and 2021.

This is the right thing to do to protect Maryland patients and ensure accountability for hospitals. DTMG therefore strongly supports HB0694 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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