

Testimony in Support of HB 694

Hospitals – Financial Assistance – Medical Bill Reimbursement

TO: Hon. Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Kayla Mock, Political Organizer

United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400

Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, I appreciate the chance to share my testimony on behalf of our over 10,000 members in Maryland, working on the front lines of the ongoing pandemic in grocery, retail, food distribution, law enforcement, and healthcare. Through collective bargaining, our members raise the workplace standards of wages, benefits, safety, and retirement for all workers.

We strong support HB 694 and urge this committee to vote it favorably.

HB 694 is in response to the shocking report by the Health Services Cost Review Commission that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who should have received free medical care in 2017 and 2018. This bill would create a three-step process to make these patients whole:

1. It would identify patients who qualified for free medical care in 2017 and 2018 but paid towards a bill through the Office of the Comptroller and the Department of Human Services by running independent analyses.

2. Those patients who were identified through this process would receive a notification in the mail alerting them that they are eligible for a refund and would outline the steps to request what was due.
3. Hospitals would reimburse patients who have made claims for reimbursement.

This bill puts hard-earned cash back in the hands of low-income Marylanders who were robbed by the hospitals that were supposed to care for them. HB 694 gives hospitals the chance to start making things right.

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