

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 168 - Human Services - Temporary Cash Assistance -
Calculation of Benefits**

**House Appropriations Committee
January 31, 2023**



Health Care for the Homeless supports House Bill 168 which will help some families move out of homelessness while preventing others from entering homelessness. This bill requires the Department of Human Services to end the practice of reducing a Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefit if the family receiving the benefit also receives housing assistance. This is typically a \$60 a month reduction.

Health Care for the Homeless works with many clients who utilize TCA and we have an inherent understanding of the importance of this program for families experiencing poverty as well as the barriers the current TCA system erects in preventing families from exiting homelessness.

A \$60 reduction in TCA is equivalent to families losing up to 10% of their possible maximum benefit. This policy sends already vulnerable families into deeper poverty. For families living in poverty, sixty dollars a month can have an outsized impact on their ability to eat, get to work and meet their basic obligations. Families receiving TCA spend money in their communities and a decrease in TCA means they are spending less at local businesses.

People receiving a housing subsidy should not be penalized in the calculation of their public assistance benefits. It is time for Maryland to join the overwhelming majority of states in discontinuing this practice.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 168

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Our mission is to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, housing and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.