

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 59

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Small Employers – Special Enrollment Period and Marketing

Before the Senate Finance Committee

By Lauren Edwards on behalf of The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

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Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 59. This bill would invest \$5 million/year into a five-year outreach program to help small employers and their employees get connected with health coverage. This outreach would include education and training regarding existing coverage options, including enrolling in coverage through Maryland Health Connection, the state's online insurance marketplace, as well as options for employer-sponsored plans both on- and off- exchange. Such a marketing and outreach program would both help to reduce the overall uninsured rate in the state and support Maryland's small employers by ensuring that their employees have the coverage they need to remain healthy and productive. In addition to helping employees stay healthy, health coverage also helps make employment opportunities more attractive to job seekers which is important in the current economic climate. Small businesses are more likely than large businesses to be owned by people of color and Maryland has the highest rate per-capita of businesses owned by people of color in the nation. Providing better opportunities for small businesses and nonprofits to help their employees connect with health coverage will improve health equity. We urge a favorable report for SB 59.

