



February 2, 2023

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association

Support of SB 26 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Dear Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Honorable Members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. The American Heart Association extends its strong support for Senate Bill 26 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

Access to healthcare is essential and too many Marylanders struggle with the cumbersome paperwork requirements to enroll in the many programs that support health such as Medicaid and SNAP. With this legislation we can help to change all that and make the lives of low-income Marylanders a little bit easier. By automatically granting Medicaid eligibility to children and adults enrolled in SNAP, this will help connect people in need into the programs the state has set up to support them in the first place. Based on Census Bureau data for 2021, it would help over 60,000 uninsured Marylanders get the health coverage they need, including 23,000 Black Marylanders and 28,000 Latinos, making this a way to dramatically reduce the levels of uninsured in Maryland while at the same time improving health equity. This legislation would also eliminate paperwork currently required for over half a million SNAP recipients in Maryland to renew their Medicaid benefits, creating administrative savings for Maryland. In addition, this bill would improve other social determinants of health by streamlining utility assistance enrollment, expanding access to electric assistance, and automatically enrolling seniors into SNAP if they qualify for Supplemental Security Income.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 26 to support the health of all Marylanders.