



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

Senate Bill 26: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and  
Workgroup on Low-Income Utility Assistance

March 21, 2023

*Written Testimony Only*

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 26.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our skilled nursing members provide the majority of long-term and post-acute care to Marylanders in need and can be found in nearly every jurisdiction of the state.

Senate Bill 26 requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025, to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program; and requires the Workgroup on Low-Income Utility Assistance to submit a final report to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before January 1, 2024, of its findings and recommendations, including recommended legislative and regulatory changes.

According to Feeding America, 100 percent of U.S. counties have some level of food insecurity. Such food insecurity is experienced by many different racial and ethnic groups, and by every age cohort. Sadly, children are most often the victims of food insecurity.

In my personal experience, before the pandemic, it was common for families with loved ones in a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center to eat meals in the center as part of free or discounted meal programs. Unfortunately, in many cases, those programs are less prevalent in our setting due to infectious disease prevention protocols.

People are healthier and children learn better when they have consistent access to healthcare and food. Maryland has the financial resources to take this important step forward, and such a proactive approach will likely lower healthcare and public assistance costs in future years. In addition, this legislation will be a positive step toward improving health equity and addressing social determinants of health in Maryland.

**For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 26.**

*Submitted by:*

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