



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

January 24, 2024

SB 228

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Qualified Health Plans – Dental Coverage

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 228. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 228 seeks to repeal a provision of the law, ensuring that all Qualified Health Plans (QHPs) sold through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) include pediatric dental benefits.

The MCC believes it is essential to advocate for policies that prioritize the well-being and comprehensive health of children; aligning with our values to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. The proposed legislation takes a significant step towards promoting the health and welfare of our youngest members by ensuring that pediatric dental benefits are an integral part of all QHPs.

Children are a precious and vulnerable part of our community; their physical and emotional well-being is of paramount importance. This legislation reflects a commitment to providing comprehensive health coverage that addresses the unique needs of children, promoting early intervention and fostering a foundation for a healthy and fulfilling life. The legislation also helps ensure that all families, regardless of their circumstances, have access to the necessary resources to safeguard the health of their children.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 228.

