



March 13, 2008

Delegate Peter Hammen, Chairman  
Delegate Shane Pendergrass, Vice Chairman  
House Health & Government Operations (HGO) Committee  
241 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill (HB) 1404—Support

Dear Chairman Hammen and Vice Chairman Pendergrass:

Children's National Medical Center (Children's,) strongly supports HB 1404, the "Eliminating Barriers to Enrollment Act." Children's applauds Delegate Heather Mizeur for her leadership and common sense approach to ensuring children who are eligible for Maryland's public health insurance programs not only get enrolled, but remain enrolled.

Located just three miles from the Maryland border, Children's annually devotes nearly 60 percent of our inpatient care to children from Maryland. Maryland children enrolled in the state's public health insurance programs constitute a significant portion of these patients. In hospital Fiscal Year 2007, nearly 50 percent of our total Medicaid inpatient care was devoted to children from Maryland, and 42 percent of our total Maryland admissions were Maryland Medicaid recipients.

Children's not only provides high quality health care for children enrolled in Medicaid, we employ personnel onsite who work with families to complete the Medicaid application process and follow it through to approval. We also assist families who apply for Medicaid outside our hospital that experience difficulties getting through the application process.

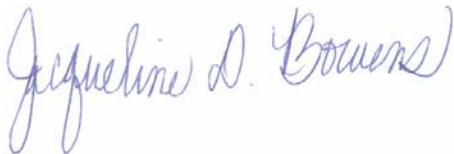
According to data from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Children's Hospitals, nearly 10 percent, or more than 143,000 Maryland children, are uninsured. More than 75 percent of these children are currently eligible for either Medicaid or the Maryland Children's Health Program, but remain unenrolled. Our experience caring for both insured and uninsured children finds that children who lack health insurance are generally sicker and are likely to incur higher health care costs from lack of access to timely preventive care.

HB 1404 would expand guaranteed eligibility for those children who qualify to receive health care through the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and its managed care organizations from six months to twelve months. Twelve month continuous eligibility is a simple and effective way to ensure children retain coverage. Once determined eligible for the program, children remain eligible until their next review, regardless of changes in family income.

In addition, HB 1404 would grant presumptive eligibility for this same population of children. In general, presumptive eligibility helps states cover children more quickly by allowing them to provide immediate, but temporary, enrollment in Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to children who appear to meet program eligibility standards. During a period of presumptive eligibility, children have access to the full range of covered services (for whichever program they are presumed to be eligible), allowing them to receive needed health care immediately rather than waiting for completion of a full eligibility determination. This approach facilitates access to care for uninsured children and is an effective tool in identifying and enrolling eligible children.

On behalf of Children's National Medical Center – including our physicians, nurses, staff and volunteers – thank you for making health care for Maryland's children a priority. We are proud to serve Maryland's children and look forward to serving more families in the future.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline D. Bowens  
Vice President and Chief  
Government & External Affairs Officer  
Children's National Medical Center

CC: Members of the House HGO Committee  
Delegate Mizour