

**HB 910 – Maryland Health Benefit Exchange - Application for State
Innovation Waiver**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 10, 2017**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Consumer Health First (formerly the Maryland Women’s Coalition for Health Care Reform), is a nonpartisan, statewide alliance of thousands of individuals and one hundred organizations working to promote health equity through high-quality, comprehensive and affordable health care for all Marylanders. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our support with amendments for House Bill 910 – *Maryland Health Benefit Exchange - Application for State Innovation Waiver*.

HB 910 requires that the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange apply for a § 1332 Waiver under the Affordable Care Act to allow undocumented immigrants to obtain health insurance through the Exchange. Under the Affordable Care Act, Maryland’s uninsured rate has declined from 11.3% in 2010 to 6.6% in 2015.¹ However, many of the remaining uninsured are undocumented immigrants who would purchase coverage through the exchange if they were able. Therefore, we believe that this legislation provides an opportunity to continue our progress towards universal coverage. That is good both for individuals and for the health of our community at large.

We also appreciate and support Delegate Pena-Melnyk’s amendment. It will ensure that any information kept by the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, which may contain the immigration status of enrollees or family members, will be kept confidential and not released to federal immigration agencies. We believe that this amendment strengthens the legislation and reflects the State's moral obligation.

We ask for your support with amendments of HB 910 and urge a favorable report.

¹Department of Legislative Services, *Assessing the Impact of Health Care Reform in Maryland*
<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/LegisLegal/2017-Impact-Health-Care-Reform.pdf>, 16.