



Health Care for All

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HEALTH CARE SUCCESS IN MARYLAND SINCE JANUARY 2007

--Under the leadership of Governor Martin O'Malley, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, and the Maryland General Assembly, Maryland has gone from 44th in the nation in health care coverage for adults to 16th and expanded health care coverage to over 170,000 parents, children, and seniors.

--The Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Care Coverage Act of 2007 provided health care coverage to over 63,000 uninsured Maryland parents and caregivers, many of whom would have otherwise had to use hospital emergency rooms for their health care needs. This in turn would increase what we all pay in higher premiums for uncompensated hospital care. Passed in 2007 yet still not implemented would be an expansion to over 100,000 uninsured childless adults – this expansion put on hold due to economic constraints, would be a major step forward for Marylanders with little to no shot at securing health care coverage. A great way to fully fund the 2007 Health Care Coverage Act would be a dime a drink alcohol tax increase that would also save lives and money.

--The Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Care Coverage Act of 2007 also provided substantial grants to over 200 Maryland small businesses that had been unable to provide health care for their employees which have enabled them to provide this health care coverage.

---Funding for the Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Care Coverage Act of 2007 was made possible by a one dollar per pack increase in the state cigarette tax. This reduced the number of packs of cigarettes sold in Maryland by 74 million (and thereby saving thousands of lives from the horrors of tobacco caused illness and death) and raised an additional \$144 million per year. This revenue is almost identical to the state's cost for the health care expansion.

--The O'Malley/Brown Administration has worked with the General Assembly and health care advocacy groups to make sure that over 85,000 children who have been eligible for state health care coverage got enrolled and covered. The Administration has also worked to make sure that these children have proper dental care to avoid another tragedy such as the death a few years ago of young Deamonte Driver who could not get proper dental care. New outreach strategies that have proven effective would include the Kids First Act, the Foster Kids Act, as well as reaching out to Medicaid eligible children in Baltimore City through the school lunch program – all of these inventive laws have aided in the exceptional enrollment of Maryland's children.

--The Governor and General Assembly enacted legislation that increased the age limit from 18 to 25 for young people to stay on their parents' health care plans. This allows thousands of Maryland young adults to keep health care coverage while they are students or look for jobs that offer health insurance.

--The Governor and General Assembly, with substantial assistance from CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield, enacted legislation that closes the prescription drug donut hole for many Maryland seniors by covering more of their prescription drug costs. To date, over 23,000 seniors have enrolled and benefited from this legislation.

-- The Governor and General Assembly enacted legislation to reduce the burden of hospital debt.