



MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

**MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
H.1403/S.855, AN ACT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE HEALTH COVERAGE FOR
CHILDREN
July 15, 2025**

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is a professional association of over 23,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, to provide them a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them to provide the best care possible. The Medical Society is committed to working for the best possible health care for every patient in the Commonwealth, regardless of immigration status. To that end, the Medical Society strives to increase access to medical care for marginalized populations, and these two bills will help accomplish that by advancing the goals of promoting health equity and increasing access to health care for all children.

Massachusetts is a leader in access to health care for children; however, significant gaps and inequities remain. Between 31,000 and 48,000 children and young adults, do not have access to comprehensive health coverage simply because of their immigration status, which most—if not all—children and young adults have no control over. Many of these children can only access care through safety net programs, which have strict limits on covered benefits or provider types. As a result, these programs do not provide the comprehensive coverage that children need. These bills would ensure that otherwise eligible children and young adults are not excluded from comprehensive MassHealth coverage simply because of their immigration status.

Barriers to quality health care have been proven to have long-term, negative impacts on children's overall physical, developmental, and behavioral wellbeing. As such, we recognize that access to medical care is the first step toward ensuring quality health care delivery and improved health outcomes. Accordingly, the Medical Society strives for increased access to medical care, regardless of immigration status. Inadequate health coverage also puts excessive stress on families who already experience barriers to linguistically and culturally appropriate care. These families may already face discrimination, trauma, and socioeconomic hardship.

Inadequate coverage results in increased health system costs through emergency room visits, longer inpatient hospital stays, or more acute, intensive interventions, which in many instances, could be avoided with more inclusive coverage. It also impacts the health and wellbeing of the entire family. It is more important than ever to ensure that all children in our Commonwealth can be guaranteed comprehensive health coverage that provides universal access to equitable, high-quality, continuous, affordable health care.

An Act to ensure equitable health coverage for children (H.1403/S.855) would help address many of these issues by removing immigration status as a barrier to MassHealth coverage for children and young adults in the Commonwealth. Twelve other states have already passed similar policies. Massachusetts and New Hampshire are the only remaining New England states



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that restrict Medicaid eligibility based on immigration status for children of all ages. We recognize that these are challenging and uncertain times, and that the state may face substantial funding challenges based on recent federal policy changes. While the goal is to pass Cover All Kids, it is crucial that Massachusetts does not go backwards and do all we can to protect the current programs the state has in place. We are committed to working with policymakers to navigating these challenging circumstances while striving to ensure vulnerable populations are able to access comprehensive medical care.

Thank you for your consideration, the Medical Society respectfully urges a favorable report on H.1403/S.855 *An Act to ensure equitable health coverage for children.*