



MB&TPI FACT SHEET

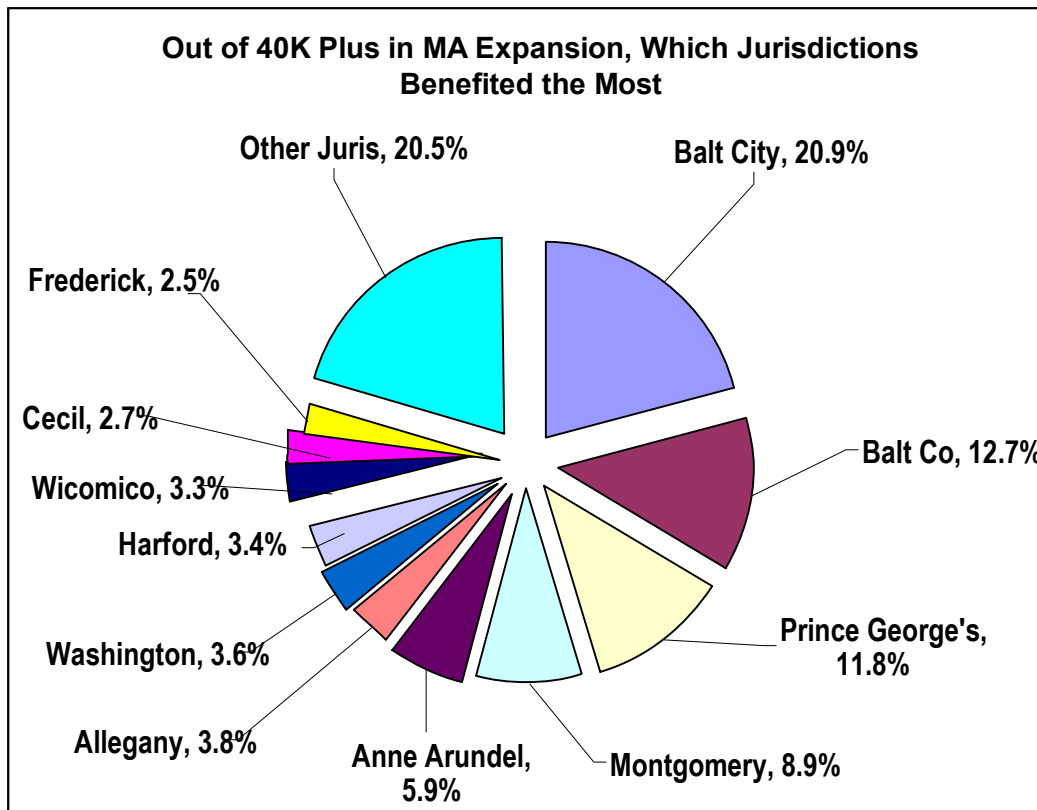
Maryland Health Care Coverage Expands, Un-Met Needs Persist

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Maryland's Working Families & Small Businesses Act, which took effect on July 1, 2008, has literally been a lifesaver for over 40,000 Marylanders.¹ The Act in its entirety:

- Broadens Medical Assistance (MA) qualifications to cover parents and caretakers making up to 116 percent of FPL (which is \$20,416 for a household of 3. In this scenario, there is no asset limit, unless "medically needy").
- Provided \$15 million in funding in fiscal year 2009 to establish a *Small Employer Health Insurance Premium Subsidy Program*. This is particularly important. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, in 2006, 94% of firms with more than 50 employees offered health insurance to their employees. Unfortunately, the same can not be said for firms with 50 employees or fewer, which many times can not afford to buy coverage. Only 56% of these businesses offered coverage to their employees.²
- *Primary Adult Care Program (PAC)* – to expand PAC benefits (i.e. pharmacy and basic health services) over three years to adults without children with household income up to 116 percent of FPL (which is \$12,064 per year for one adult. For one adult the asset limit is \$4000).

The portion of the expansion to cover parents and caretakers has positively impacted each of the 24 jurisdictions. According to Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition, nearly one dozen jurisdictions have seen MA enrollment increases in the thousands from July 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009. Baltimore City has increased enrollment by over 8,500 and Baltimore County by over 5,000, Prince George's County by over 4,800, Montgomery County by over 3,600 and Anne Arundel County by over 2,400. Allegany, Washington, Harford, Wicomico, Cecil and Frederick Counties have increases in MA between 1,000 beyond 1,500. Whereas, the remaining jurisdictions have seen MA enrollment increases in the hundreds (from over 200 to 850).



Source: Maryland Health Care for All ³

While we celebrate the victory of this phase of MA expansion, we must not lose sight that MA expansion to childless adults (or PAC) at 116 percent federal poverty guideline remains unfunded indefinitely. By 2013, Medicaid expansion was projected to cover 52,056 childless adults, including the 30,000 PAC enrollees (from 2008).⁴

One of the many adults who struggle with our complex health care system is Jeff. Maryland Alliance for the Poor's (MAP) Community Outreach Coordinator, Deborah Rudacille learned of Jeff's story this past spring.

Jeff is a Carroll County man who actually has children yet was denied Medical Assistance to help pay the 20% costs of the costs of multiple back surgeries due to chronic back problems that left him disabled.⁵ Jeff worked hard his entire adult life despite acquiring a back injury from playing football in high school. As an adult he sustained additional affliction to his back in a motorcycle accident, which severely damaged five discs in his back. Despite struggling with a health care that didn't want to pay for his medical procedures, through his tenacity he eventually received treatment. After getting back on his feet, Jeff sustained further injury when slipping on his deck. This third episode lead to tug-of-war battles with the social security and health care system. While Jeff's story warrants much attention, it is one of many Marylanders (some with and without children) who struggle in a complex health care system.

Like many states, Maryland is waiting to hear what our leaders in Washington are doing to enact health care reform legislation. If Washington fails to enact reforms this year, or if the national health care plan leave gaps in coverage, then Maryland leaders cannot forget about this unfunded promise. When general fund revenues are back on pace, our leaders in Annapolis should consider funding the PAC program so that adults like Jeff are covered.

About the Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute

The Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute is a nonpartisan research organization that provides timely, accurate and accessible analysis of state budget and tax issues. In addition to general budget and tax research and analysis, the Institute examines issues affecting low-income Marylanders and other vulnerable populations and the important community programs that serve them. For additional information, to be added to our e-mail list, or to make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit our website at www.marylandpolicy.org.

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¹ Maryland Health Care for All.

² The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Maryland: Percent of Private Sector Establishments That Offer Health Insurance to Employees, by Firm Size, 2006. 2006. 21 Oct. 2008
<<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/profileind.jsp?ind=176&cat=3&rgn=22>>.

³ Maryland Health Care for All.

⁴ Maryland DLS. Fiscal and Policy Note. Senate Bill 6 / pg 6. Special Session 2007.

⁵ Down, Out and Disabled. Maryland Alliance for the Poor. 04 May 2009.