

sponsored health benefit plan or an individual health benefit plan on a voluntary basis to individuals with a family income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level; and

(2) if the federal Health Care Financing Administration approves extending the use of an employer sponsored health benefit plan or an individual health benefit plan to individuals with a family income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, the feasibility of and methods for implementing the use of employer sponsored health benefit plans or individuals health benefit plans on a voluntary basis to individuals with a family income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

SECTION 8. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1, 1998, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall study and report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on the administrative costs associated with mandating the use of employer sponsored health benefit plans, individual health benefit plans, and family contribution requirements, including an estimate of the administrative costs that the Department, carriers, managed care organizations, and employers will incur in implementing the use of employer sponsored health benefit plans, individual health benefit plans, and family contribution amounts. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, the Department shall take whatever steps are necessary to move forward with the implementation of the requirements contained in Title 15, Subtitle 3 of the Health - General Article.

SECTION 9. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before December 1, 1998, the Department of Legislative Services shall study and report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the structure and organization of entities similar to the Maryland Health Care Foundation established under § 20-501 of the Health - General Article.

SECTION 10. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That if any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is not approved by the federal Health Care Financing Administration, that disapproval does not affect other provisions or any other application of this Act which is approved, and for this purpose the provisions of this Act are declared severable.

SECTION 11. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That at the end of June 30, 2004, with no further action required by the General Assembly, Section 3 of this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

SECTION 12. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health and safety, has been passed by a ye and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.

Approved April 28, 1998.