



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 7, 2024

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Concern- Senate Bill 201- Public Health - Childbirth - Paternity Test

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 201.

SB 201 requires an attending physician to provide an oral and written offer for a paternity test to the presumed father of a child born at a health care facility before a birth certificate form is completed for the child.

The hospital field has several concerns about this legislation. Primarily, it is not the role of the attending physician to make a determination about the identity of the presumed father or to offer a paternity test. After a newborn is delivered, the clinical hospital care team are focused on the well-being of the birthing person and baby. Placing additional requirements on the care team could detract them from providing timely care.

There is an extensive process outlined in statute for filing a birth certificate for an individual who is not married who gives birth to a child.^{1,2} Changes to this process that involve the attending physician, as required by SB 201, present concerns about the impact on the birthing person, newborn, hospital staff, other patients, and visitors, if there is a domestic disagreement regarding the paternity of the child.

For these reasons, MHA expresses deep concern with the concepts outlined in the bill and respectfully requests an *unfavorable* report on SB 201.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Department of Legislative Services. (2023). "[SB 410: Fiscal and Policy Note.](#)"

² [Md. Code, Health General 4-208](#)