



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 12, 2020

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

From: Jennifer Witten, Vice President, Government Affairs
Maryland Hospital Association

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 183- Health Insurance Health Benefits Plans- Special Enrollment Period for Pregnancy

Dear Chairman Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 61 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 183. Maryland's hospitals care for millions of people each year, treating 2.3 million in emergency departments and delivering more than 67,000 babies.

Health care coverage is vital to the success of efforts to transform care delivery and advance health care for Marylanders. MHA is a leading voice to ensure broad-based insurance coverage, and nothing could be more important than ensuring coverage for an expectant mother.

The U.S. National Library of Medicine, part of the National Institutes of Health, released [data](#) in 2012 showing a lack of prenatal care leads to higher infant mortality rates.ⁱ Researchers studied 32,206,417 births over eight years. The 11.2% of expectant mothers who received late or no prenatal care were more likely to be African American and Hispanic, younger than 20 and lack a high-school education. Those who received inadequate prenatal care were more likely to have maternal health risks and, sadly, higher rates of mortality.

MHA is committed to improving maternal mortality rates in Maryland—particularly among women of color. While insurance coverage alone does not guarantee improved health for moms and newborns, it is essential to provide consistent and affordable access to the broad range of services they need. This bill advances that access to important care for pregnant women by allowing a pregnant woman to access insurance coverage outside of open enrollment. This step lifts a barrier for expectant moms to receive necessary prenatal care—improving their health and the health of their babies.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report.

For more information, please contact:
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ⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22836820>