

Chapter 83

(Senate Bill 266)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Health Care Commission – Mortality Rates of African American Infants and Infants in Rural Areas – Study

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Health Care Commission, in consultation with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, *the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Vital Statistics Administration*, and interested stakeholders, to conduct a study regarding the mortality rates of African American infants and infants in rural areas; requiring the Commission, in conducting the study, to examine certain factors and make certain recommendations; requiring, on or before a certain date, the Commission to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly; and generally relating to the Maryland Health Care Commission and a study of the mortality rates of African American infants and infants in rural areas.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) The Maryland Health Care Commission, in consultation with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, *the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Vital Statistics Administration*, and interested stakeholders, shall conduct a study regarding the mortality rates of African American infants and infants in rural areas.

(b) In conducting the study required under subsection (a) of this section, the Maryland Health Care Commission shall:

(1) examine factors, beyond the known factors of low birth weight, teen pregnancy, poor nutrition, and lack of prenatal care, affecting the mortality of African American infants and infants in rural areas in the United States and in the State;

(2) research programs in other countries, states, and localities, including Baltimore City, that have aimed to reduce the infant mortality rate;

(3) make recommendations on methods to reduce the mortality rate of African American infants and infants in rural areas;

(4) make recommendations on ways to use pregnancy navigators or community health workers to assist pregnant women with the goal of reducing the infant mortality rate;

(5) make legislative recommendations regarding the establishment of a permanent council for lowering rates of disparity with respect to infant mortality; and

(6) make recommendations regarding methods to reduce the costs associated with low birth weight infants and with infant mortality.

(c) On or before ~~June 30~~ November 1, 2019, the Maryland Health Care Commission shall report its findings and recommendations, including draft legislation establishing a permanent council on infant mortality in the State, to the Senate ~~Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs~~ Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

Approved by the Governor, April 10, 2018.