

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 583

(Delegate Wilkins, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

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Health – Maternal Mortality Review Program – Recommendations and  
Reporting Requirement

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This bill requires the Maternal Mortality Review Program, in consultation with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, to make recommendations to reduce any disparities in the maternal mortality rate (MMR), including recommendations related to social determinants of health. The program must also include in its annual report a section on racial disparities that contains specified information.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill’s requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** Chapter 74 of 2000 established Maryland’s Maternal Mortality Review Program. The purpose of the program is to (1) identify maternal death cases; (2) review medical records and other relevant data; (3) determine preventability of death; (4) develop recommendations for the prevention of maternal deaths; and (5) disseminate findings and recommendations to policymakers, health care providers, health care facilities, and the public. Maternal mortality reviews are conducted by a committee of clinical experts from across the State, the Maternal Mortality Review

Committee. The program must submit an annual report on findings, recommendations, and program actions to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Chapter 308 of 2018 requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish a Maternal Mortality Stakeholder Group. The stakeholder group is charged with examining issues resulting in disparities in maternal deaths, reviewing the status of implementation of previous recommendations, and identifying new recommendations with a focus on initiatives to address disparities in maternal deaths. The group will review the Maternal Mortality Review Program's 2018 annual report, and responses and recommendations from the stakeholders will be included in the 2019 annual report.

The program's 2018 annual [report](#) includes a section on racial disparity. The report notes that, in the United States, Black women have an MMR 2.4 times greater than White women, a disparity that has persisted since the 1940s. In Maryland, there is also a large disparity between MMRs among Black and White women. For the period 2012 through 2016, the Black MMR is 3.7 times that of the White MMR. Although Maryland's MMR had dropped over the last decade and is now below the national average, the racial disparity has widened and significant racial disparities in maternal death persist.

In 2016, 39 pregnancy-associated deaths were identified (the death of a woman while pregnant or within one year of pregnancy conclusion, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, and regardless of the cause of death). Of these cases, 9 (23%) were pregnancy-related (cause of death related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management). Non-cardiovascular medical conditions and homicide were the leading causes of pregnancy-related death. The remaining 30 cases were non-pregnancy-related deaths. The leading cause of non-pregnancy-related death for the fourth year in a row was substance use and unintentional overdose. Of all pregnancy-related deaths, 70% of non-pregnancy-related deaths and 89% of pregnancy-related deaths were considered preventable or potentially preventable.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 356 (Senator Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*) - Finance.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 13, 2019  
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