

Chapter 708

(Senate Bill 676)

AN ACT concerning

**Health Care Facilities – Hospitals and Freestanding Birthing Centers –
Perinatal Care Standards**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Health, in coordination with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, to adopt regulations establishing minimum perinatal care standards for certain hospitals that meet or exceed the Maryland Perinatal System Standards; requiring certain hospitals and freestanding birthing centers, as a condition of licensure, to comply with certain minimum perinatal care standards; and generally relating to standards of care for hospitals and freestanding birthing centers.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Health – General
Section 19–319(a) and 19–3B–02(a) and (b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Health – General
Section 19–319(j) and 19–3B–03(a)(1)(ii)9.
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Health – General
Section 19–3B–03(a)(1)(ii)8. and 9.
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Health – General

19–319.

(a) To qualify for a license, an applicant and the hospital or related institution to be operated shall meet the requirements of this section.

(J) (1) THE DEPARTMENT, IN COORDINATION WITH THE MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS, SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING MINIMUM PERINATAL CARE STANDARDS THAT MEET OR EXCEED THE MARYLAND PERINATAL SYSTEM STANDARDS FOR EACH HOSPITAL THAT PROVIDES OBSTETRICAL SERVICES.

(2) EACH HOSPITAL THAT PROVIDES OBSTETRICAL SERVICES SHALL COMPLY WITH THE PERINATAL CARE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION AS A CONDITION OF LICENSURE.

19-3B-02.

(a) A freestanding ambulatory care facility may not operate in the State unless the Secretary has granted the facility a license.

(b) The Secretary shall issue a license to an applicant that meets the requirements of this subtitle and all applicable regulations adopted by the Secretary.

19-3B-03.

(a) (1) After consultation with representatives of payors, health care practitioners, and freestanding ambulatory care facilities, the Secretary shall by regulation establish:

(ii) Standards to ensure quality of care and patient safety that shall include:

8. The use of ultrasound imaging in a freestanding birthing center; [and]

9. MINIMUM PERINATAL CARE STANDARDS FOR A FREESTANDING BIRTHING CENTER THAT MEET OR EXCEED THE MARYLAND PERINATAL SYSTEM STANDARDS THAT A FREESTANDING BIRTHING CENTER SHALL MEET AS A CONDITION OF LICENSURE; AND

[9.] 10. Any other procedures that the Secretary considers necessary for quality of care and patient safety.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Maryland Department of Health shall adopt the regulations required under §§ 19-319(j)(1) and 19-3B-03(a)(1)(ii)9 of the Health – General Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act, on or before October 1, 2026.

SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, May 20, 2025.