



To: The Honorable Chair, Delegate Shane Pendergrass, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

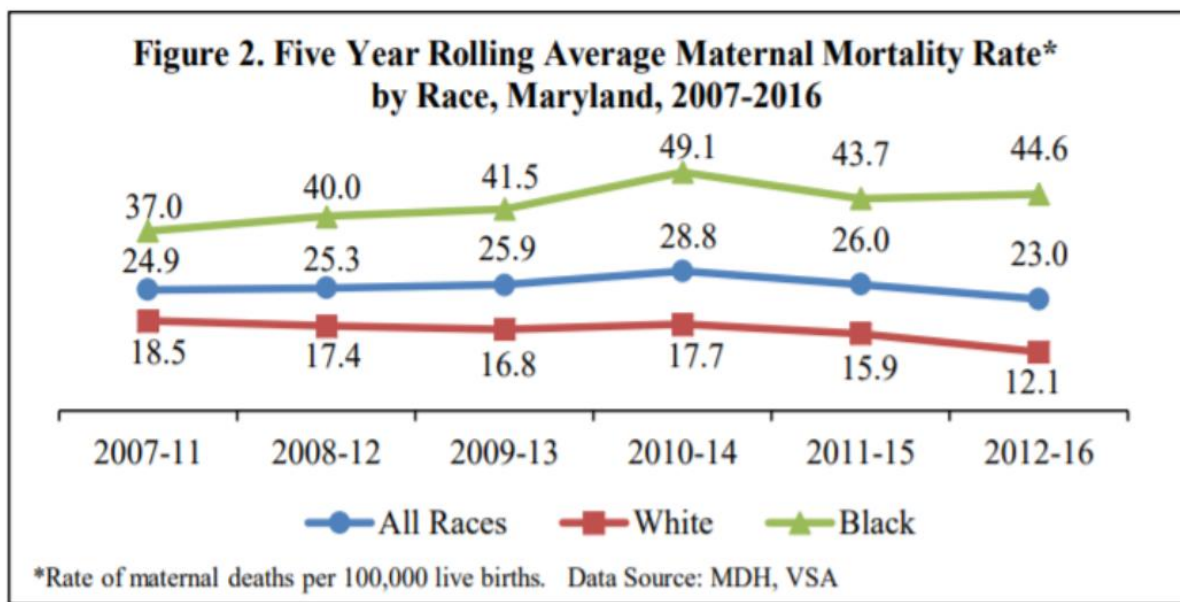
From: Melissa S. Rock, Birth to Three Strategic Initiative Director

Re: **HB 837: Public Health—Maternal Mortality and Morbidity—Implicit Bias Training and Study**

Date: February 27, 2020

Position: **SUPPORT**

There are significant racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black women and Black babies. Black women in Maryland are 3-4 times more likely to die after childbirth than White women. According to the State's Maternal Mortality Review Program, "compared to 2007- 2011, the 2012-2016 White MMR in Maryland **decreased 34.6 percent** and the Black MMR **increased 20.5 percent**, increasing the racial difference. The 2012-2016 Black MMR is 3.7 times the White MMR."ⁱ (Emphasis Added.)



As stated in the preamble of HB 837, the racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black individuals **cannot** be explained by biological differences, socio-economic status, or even education level. Rather, Black patients are treated differently by medical providers than White patients. It is critical that medical providers serving pregnant individuals receive training on implicit bias to reduce this bias and eliminate the racial disparities in birth outcomes for Black pregnant individuals and their babies.

ACY is also very supportive of the requirement to study how the Maternal Mortality Review team could also evaluate Maternal Morbidity cases. There are very few instances of maternal mortality, and far more times a pregnant individual comes close to dying, which are instances of maternal morbidity. By studying the near miss cases in addition to the actual deaths we will do better at preventing future maternal mortality. **We urge this committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on HB 837 to prevent maternal mortality and reduce the racial disparities therein.**

ⁱ "Maryland Maternal Mortality Review 2018 Annual Report," Health –General Article § 13-207 at p. 6.
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/documents/Health-General-Article-%C2%A713-1207-2018-Annual-Report-Maryland-Maternal-Mortality-Review.pdf>