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Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Testimony in Support of House Bill 1518

Opioid–Exposed Newborns and Parents Addicted to Opioids – Mobile Application – Pilot Program

(I’m Alive Today App)

March 10, 2020

Chairwoman Shane E. Pendergrass, Vice Chair Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations,

A well-known song by Stevie Wonder starts with “Isn’t she lovely - Isn’t she wonderful” the lyrics in the tune speaks to the love and care of one’s baby. Unfortunately, our Maryland’s opium / heroin epidemic has many negative impacts on our community including the risk of harm and safety of a child whose parent has given birth to a substance exposed newborn.

We have prepared a very sad slide show of data, by county, of 2,295 referrals of substance exposed newborns in the State of Maryland in 2019. This is a 15% increase over 2016.

Locally in the communities I represent, Washington County; 7 out of 12 child deaths in 2017 were born as substance exposed newborns. In the last four years, Washington County has more than tripled the number of substance exposed newborns (FY’15-70 newborns to FY’19 183 newborns).

Elizabeth Stahlman from Allegany County, the concept creator of the “I’m Alive Today” App, has submitted written testimony located in you laptop.

The purpose of the bill is to require the Social Services Administration, in consultation with the local departments of social services, to establish a pilot program in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties to communicate with a certain opioid–addicted parent through a mobile application.

As the community and nation struggles to figure out how to cope with the opioid epidemic, this would be a stop-gap measure to help protect the innocent children that are born into homes of addiction. Let’s help parents sing “Isn’t she lovely” to their child, watch them grow, and become a better parent in the process.

I urge a favorable report for HB1518 “I’m Alive Today” app.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike McKay

Serving Allegany and Washington Counties