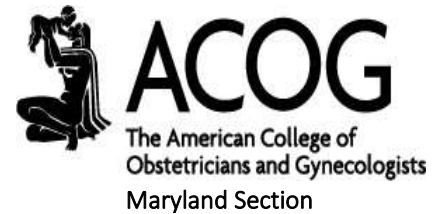




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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Mike McKay

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: March 11, 2020

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 1518 – *Opioid-Exposed Newborns and Parents Addicted to Opioids – Mobile Application – Pilot Program (I’m Alive Today App)*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (MDACOG) submit this letter of **opposition** for House Bill 1518.

House Bill 1518 requires the Social Services Administration (SSA) in the Department of Human Services in consultation with local departments of social services to establish a pilot program in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties to communicate with an opioid addicted parent through a mobile application to assess the risk of harm to and safety of an opioid-exposed newborn. The SSA must develop a mobile application to be used by parents who are determined to have opioid addictions that could result in harm or potential harm to a child as a means of confirming a parent is safely caring for their child.

Though House Bill 1518 ostensibly attempts to provide a tool toward combating Maryland’s heroin and opioid epidemic, as well as enhancing the safety of opioid-exposed newborns, it creates obligations based on presumptions for which there is no evidence. The mobile app could lead to an assumption that just because a parent checks in on the mobile app that all is okay even if it is not and/or conversely that if a mother doesn’t check in that there is a problem even if it is only because the parent may have lost their phone or it was not working at the time of required check in. Care of these parents and their babies requires in person contact, not remote communication. While well intended, passage of House Bill 1518 would result in a waste of limited State and local resources that could otherwise be used toward more effective strategies to combat this crisis. As such, MedChi, MDAAP, and MDACOG oppose House Bill 1518 and urge an unfavorable report.

**For more information call:**

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