



Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1563

Title: Public Health – Maryland Infant Lifetime Care Trust Funded by HSCRC and
Maryland Patient Safety Center Duties

Hearing Date: March 9, 2020

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 1563 – Public Health – Maryland Infant Lifetime Care Trust Funded by HSCRC and Maryland Patient Safety Center Duties*. This bill would create a trust, supported by an assessment on hospital obstetric units, that would pay for medical and supportive care for individuals who suffer a neurological injury during birth.

After a traumatic event where an infant suffers a neurological injury during childbirth, families often turn to the courts to cover expenses relating to the newborn’s care. However, the current system does not consistently meet families’ needs and has destabilized the healthcare system. Currently, juries award a lump sum to a family for an infant’s future care following a neurological birth injury. This is difficult to estimate, and has resulted in awards that have been insufficient to cover future costs to others that have been so high that they have impacted the ability of providers to provide maternity care.

This bill would pay medical and supportive expenses from the trust as needed throughout the life of the injured individual, rather than awarding estimated lifetime costs at the outset. This would help balance the cost of these cases and allow hospitals, particularly smaller community hospitals, to operate delivery units without such financial uncertainty. In addition, we strongly support the bill’s provision requiring that the trust devote \$1 million annually to address health disparities and improve maternal and fetal outcomes across Maryland.

We believe this bill is a way forward to ensure coverage for affected families while maintaining access to maternity care, and we ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.