



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 30, 2022

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support as Amended- Senate Bill 166 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Doula Program

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of on Senate Bill 166 as amended. This bill aligns with the proposed Maryland Medicaid regulations, supported by the Doula Technical Assistance Advisory Board, to create a permanent Medicaid doula benefit.¹ Doulas were expected to be eligible to enroll in Medicaid and begin billing for services this month.

The Health Services Cost Review Commission allocated \$8 million to Medicaid to support maternal and child health goals in the Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy.² Half of this funding, including the federal match, will be used to create the permanent Medicaid benefit for doula and home visiting services. The reimbursement model allows up to eight prenatal or postpartum services in addition to attendance during labor and delivery, per birthing parent. Each prenatal or postpartum visit would include up to 60 minutes.

Research shows positive outcomes for patients who work with doulas, especially women of color and women with lower socioeconomic status.³ These outcomes include increases in breastfeeding initiation and vaginal deliveries. Allowing Medicaid reimbursement increases access to doulas for patients who otherwise could not afford it.

Maryland hospitals support the role of doulas and look forward to working with the legislature and Medicaid to support the state's intent to grant reimbursement for doula services.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report for SB 166 as amended.

For more information, please contact:
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¹ Maryland Register (December, 2021)

² Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission. (May, 2021). "[Final Recommendation on Use of Maternal and Child Health Funding.](#)"

³ Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health. (2013). "[Doula care supports near-universal breastfeeding initiation among diverse, low-income women.](#)"