



Maryland Section

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Ron Watson

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

DATE: February 15, 2023

RE: **LETTER OF INFORMATION** – Senate Bill 410 – *Public Health – Childbirth – Paternity Test*

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Maryland Section (MDACOG), which represents the Maryland physicians who serve the obstetrical and gynecological needs of Maryland women and their families, submits this **letter of information** for Senate Bill 410.

Senate Bill 410 requires an “attending physician” to offer the presumed father of a child born in a “health care facility” the option to take a paternity test. The offer to take a paternity test must be made orally, in writing, and before a birth certificate form is completed for the child. The presumed father may waive the right to take a paternity test or elect to take a paternity test at any time before the completion of the child’s birth certificate. The bill’s requirement does not apply if the attending physician is unable to contact the presumed father of the child.

While MDACOG has no objection to ensuring that a presumed father of a newborn child has the right to take a paternity test, the provisions of Senate Bill 410 could place the facility and its staff in the middle of a domestic issue, which could escalate and exacerbate workplace violence. Current law already creates a framework for addressing paternity issues and birth certificate completion where there is a question related to paternity. Therefore, MDACOG believes that Senate Bill 410, while well intended, could create unintended consequences, which the Committee should consider in the deliberation of this legislation.