



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Robbyn Lewis

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
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DATE: February 7, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 177 – *Hospitals – Care of Infants After Discharge*

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The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support with amendment** for House Bill 177.

House Bill 177 requires hospitals to provide education and information to families regarding “safe sleep practices” and the importance of providing a “safe sleep” environment for infants prior to discharge. The requirements of House Bill 177 do not replace the need for continued education and outreach on safe sleep practices after discharge throughout the first year of life. However, starting that conversation prior to discharge, including providing information on resources available after discharge, will enhance the likelihood that the parents/guardians and other family members will adopt safe sleep practices from day 1 after discharge. Early adoption of safe sleep practices will significantly decrease the likelihood of preventable infant deaths from unsafe sleep practices.

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), is the leading cause of injury death in infancy. Sleep is a big challenge for families with babies, but following safe sleep recommendations can prevent many SUID fatalities. The rate of sleep-related infant deaths declined significantly in the 1990s after the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and others recommended that babies be placed on their backs to sleep, but rates have since plateaued, and SIDS remains the leading cause of post-neonatal mortality. Black and Native American/Alaska Native infants die at rates more than double that of white babies. The AAP is committed to helping guide conversations about safe sleep with families, with the objective of making safe infant sleep the norm.

The amendments that have been offered by the sponsor as well as those offered by the Maryland Hospital Association provide practical modifications to the bill that will enhance its effective implementation. The amendments also recognize the need to continue to provide resources and education on safe sleep practices throughout the first year of life by convening relevant stakeholders to identify avenues to enhance patient education about safe sleep practices and available resources. With the amendments noted, MDAAP urges a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

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