



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

From: Danna L. Kauffman
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RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 177 – *Hospitals – Care of Infants After Discharge*

On behalf of HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM), we **support** House Bill 177. This bill requires a hospital, before discharging an infant, to inquire as to whether the infant’s parent or legal guardian is able to provide the infant with a safe sleep environment as well as a bassinet, crib, or portable crib. If the infant’s parent or legal guardian cannot provide a safe sleep environment, or a bassinet, crib, or portable crib, the hospital must provide a list of resources available for the parent or legal guardian to obtain the items necessary to provide a safe sleep environment for the infant.

Infant sleep-related deaths are one of the leading causes of infant death in Baltimore City, and they are overwhelmingly preventable. Families and caregivers can keep babies safe by following these rules:

- **Alone.** Babies should never sleep with anyone else. Share a room, but not a bed with your baby.
- **Back.** Babies should always sleep on their backs. Babies are less likely to choke when on their backs.
- **Crib.** Babies should always sleep in a crib – every night and every nap. The crib should be clean and clear. There should be no toys or blankets in the crib.
- **Don’t Smoke.** Never smoke cigarettes or marijuana in a home with babies, young children, or pregnant women. Smoke in the home makes it harder for babies to breathe well.

Currently, HCAM operates the Safe Sleep program in Baltimore City, which provides safe sleep and family planning education, assessment, referral, and equipment to qualifying Baltimore City residents. If a resident needs services and meets the criteria, a safe sleep coordinator goes to the resident’s home to:

- Deliver a new portable crib and instruct the residents on how to assemble it;
- Provide information on how to keep a baby safe when sleeping;
- Inform the resident on how to sign up for HealthChoice and health insurance; and
- Give additional information on available programs and resources.

By requiring hospitals to provide safe sleep information prior to discharge, it will better promote safe sleep strategies and ensure that parents or legal guardians have the necessary resources to reduce child fatalities. HCAM urges a favorable report on House Bill 177.