



TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Lesley J. Lopez

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: March 6, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1412 – *Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund – Establishment*

On behalf of the Maryland Section of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we submit this **support** for House Bill 1412.

House Bill 1412 establishes the Abortion Care Access Grant Program with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to provide grants and resources to community-based organizations to support safe access to abortion care in Maryland. Funding will be available for enhancing the security of abortion provider facilities, providing resources to support abortion care access and wrap-around services, such as transportation for uninsured individuals or resources for individuals who are insured but cannot use their insurance for fear of family members receiving an explanation of benefits. MDH will also have the authority to develop additional programming to support access to abortion care in conjunction with stakeholders.

The program will be funded by unspent insurance premiums for abortion coverage. The Affordable Care Act requires insurers to charge \$12 per year for abortion coverage for all insured individuals. The insurers are prohibited by federal law from using the funds for other costs and are required to keep the monies in a separate account. These unspent funds will be transferred to MDH annually to ensure a sustainable funding source.

While Maryland has increased access to abortion care through the passage of several critical reproductive rights bills in previous sessions, access to abortion care remains challenging for many individuals, especially with respect to safety and privacy issues that create barriers to easy access. House Bill 1412 will help address those access challenges. A favorable report is requested.