



Maryland Section

Senate Finance Committee

March 25, 2025

House Bill 1251 – *Hospitals and Medical Professional Liability Insurers – Obstetric Services Policies (Doula and Birth Policy Transparency Act)*

POSITION: SUPPORT AS AMENDED

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, supports House Bill 1251 as amended.

The amended version of House Bill 1251 incorporates stakeholder amendments to clarify the bill, while preserving its original intent. The bill requires hospitals that provide obstetric care to adopt policies on doulas, informed consent for “significant medical intervention” for the birthing parent, and transfer acceptance. Hospitals must demonstrate compliance by providing evidence to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) by January 1, 2026, and whenever policies are updated thereafter. MDH will adopt regulations to implement the bill, including guidelines on how hospitals must prove they have adopted the policies. The bill does not prohibit hospitals from limiting the number of doulas or authorized guests.

MDACOG supports the requirement for hospitals to establish clear policies on doulas, informed consent for significant medical interventions, and transfer acceptance. These amendments ensure that patients have access to essential support and information during childbirth while allowing flexibility for necessary medical interventions. While MDACOG acknowledges the role doulas play in patient care, we caution that the details governing doula-hospital relationships should be carefully considered. Doulas are not medical providers and should complement, rather than replace, the roles of obstetricians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. The bill, as amended, allows for policies that ensure hospital-based standards of care, patient safety protocols, and scope of practice limitations are maintained, while fostering collaborative relationships between doulas and medical teams.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on the bill as amended.

For more information call:

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