

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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The Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk
The Honorable Vice Chair Cullison
Health and Government Operations Committee
Taylor House Office Building
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March 19th, 2025

SB0156: Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services - Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage (Family Connects)

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The first few weeks after birth are a critical time for both infant and mother. This bill will establish a workgroup to analyze the implementation of home visiting for families with newborns programs. During these visits, the nurse screens the baby's health, including taking blood pressure and checking for injuries. The nurse is able to help the new parents by answering questions and referring them to community services. Programs currently exist in the City of Baltimore, Frederick County, and Prince George's County.

The differences between Senate Bill 156 and its cross-file, House Bill 334 regard the workgroup's members and scope. In Senate Bill 156, the workgroup would include one Senator, one Delegate, The Secretary of Health or their designee, one representative of the Maryland Hospital Association, two representatives of private insurance carriers, and one representative each from the Family Tree for Baltimore City, Family Connects Frederick, and Family Connects Prince George's. In the House Bill, only one representative of private insurers is included in the workgroup, and the language requires representatives from each certified site providing a home visiting model for families with newborns rather than naming specific programs. Additionally, the House Bill includes one representative each from the Maryland Nurses Association, B'More for Healthy Babies Initiative, a local health department, a federally qualified health center, and one pediatrician, one nurse midwife, and one obstetrician.

The only other difference between Senate Bill 156 and House Bill 334 is that House Bill 334 expands the purview of the workgroup to include ways to improve existing programs in Maryland and address workforce needs.

I have confidence that we can identify a workgroup that best reflects the many stakeholders. I request your support as we explore opportunities to sustainably expand access to home visiting for families with newborns programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K".

Senator Karen Lewis Young