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MAYOR

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SB0156

March 19, 2025

TO: Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 156 – Workgroup on Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services - Establishment

POSITION: **Favorable with Amendment**

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully requests a **favorable with amendment** report on Senate Bill (SB) 156.

SB 156 establishes the Workgroup on Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services, which will be required to compile updated patient data and expenditure per patient from the Family Connect Programs (a specific program and model for home visiting), compare other maternal and newborn health programs in Maryland and other states, and identify service gaps and potential funding sources to close the gaps. **The BCA supports the creation of this workgroup but recommends that the bill be amended to conform to its crossfile (HB 334).**

The Workgroup proposed in SB 156 has very limited membership, with representation from only one post-partum focused home visiting program (Family Connects). In contrast, the workgroup proposed in HB 334 is comprised of a much more diverse group, including, among others, both a representative from a local health department (LHD) and from the Baltimore City Health Department's B'more for Healthy Babies initiative.

LHDs operate most of the home-visiting programs in Maryland. Each jurisdiction has significant expertise and insights around its local needs and home visiting services. For example, in Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Health Department's B'more for Healthy Babies initiative has strategically identified how to serve the greatest number of families. The current landscape in Baltimore City combines both nurse and paraprofessional home visiting services that provide support from pregnancy through two years post-partum. Excluding LHDs from the workgroup would mean missing important information like this.

Additionally, SB 156 focuses on only one home visiting program (Family Connects), whereas the Workgroup established by HB 334 would study all of Maryland's newborn home visiting programs. Home visiting in Maryland is primarily supported by the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV), which supports seven different evidence-based home visiting models.ⁱ The Workgroup proposed in SB 156 would focus on just one of these models.

For the reasons outlined above, the Administration requests a **favorable with amendments** report on the bill.

ⁱ Maryland Department of Health Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (2020). Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. Retrieved from https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/pages/home_visiting.aspx