

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña Melnyk

Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

241 House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 422, Expedited Partner Therapy, Bacterial Vaginosis

Dear Chair Peña Melnyk,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 422, Expedited Partner Therapy, Bacterial Vaginosis, which is before the House Health and Government Operations Committee. This bill expands the use of expedited partner therapy to include bacterial vaginosis, allowing health care providers to treat partners without requiring a separate clinical visit.

Bacterial vaginosis is one of the most common vaginal infections in the United States and disproportionately affects women of color. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that nearly 50 percent of Hispanic women will experience bacterial vaginosis at some point, and recurrence rates are high when partners are not treated simultaneously. Untreated or recurrent infections are associated with increased risk of preterm birth, pelvic inflammatory disease, and heightened vulnerability to other infections. Source <https://www.cdc.gov>.

HB 422 addresses a clear gap in reproductive health care by reducing barriers to timely treatment. Requiring separate clinical visits for partners often delays care, increases costs, and leads to reinfection. Expedited partner therapy has been widely studied in the context of sexually transmitted infections and has been shown to reduce recurrence and improve health outcomes, particularly in communities facing access barriers. Extending this approach to bacterial vaginosis reflects evidence based practice and aligns policy with clinical reality.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders

For Latina patients and immigrant families, HB 422 expands access to effective reproductive health care while reducing stigma and logistical barriers. Language access challenges, lack of insurance, and limited time off work can prevent partners from seeking treatment, making expedited therapy especially impactful. MLU can help amplify the bill's benefits by partnering with community health providers to promote culturally responsive education about reproductive health, treatment options, and patient rights.

MLU urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 422.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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