



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 110 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doulas

SPONSOR: Senator Ellis

HEARING DATE: January 30, 2020

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 110**, which authorizes Medicaid, subject to the limitations of the State budget and as permitted by federal law, to provide certified doula services, including childbirth education and support services and emotional and physical support during pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum.

The positive impact of doula services on birth outcomes is well documented. As stated in a 2019 position statement from the March of Dimes: "Studies suggest that increased access to doula care, especially in under-resourced communities, can improve a range of health outcomes for mothers and babies, lower healthcare costs, reduce c-sections (cesarean sections), decrease maternal anxiety and depression, and health improve communication between low-income, racially/ethnically diverse pregnant women and their healthcare providers."¹

Despite the documented positive impact of doula support, most insurance carriers do not cover these services. Allowing reimbursement for doula services under Medicaid would provide high-risk women access to an evidence-based method for improving health outcomes. Covering doula services may also reduce disparities in birth outcomes between women of varying racial/ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 110** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

¹ March of Dimes, *March of Dimes Position Statement Doulas and Birth Outcomes*, (Jan. 30, 2019), [https://www.marchofdimes.org/materials/Doulas and birth outcomes position statement final January 30 PM.pdf](https://www.marchofdimes.org/materials/Doulas%20and%20birth%20outcomes%20position%20statement%20final%20January%2030%20PM.pdf).