



Maryland Section

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Clarence K. Lam

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: March 10, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 914 – *Doulas – Doula Technical Assistance Advisory Group and Certification*

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 with amendment** Senate Bill 914.

Senate Bill 914 establishes the Doula Technical Advisory Group to make recommendations to the Secretary of Health on establishing a voluntary doula certification program. The advisory group must submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Maryland Department of Health, the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee by January 1, 2021, and a final report by January 1, 2022. If the advisory group recommends establishment of a voluntary doula certification program in its final report, the Secretary of Health must adopt regulations establishing such a program consistent with the advisory group's recommendations.

A doula is not a health care provider but rather a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible. Research has demonstrated that the integration of doula services into the provision of perinatal services is associated with lower caesarian births, fewer obstetrical interventions, fewer complications, decreased use of pain medication, shorter labors, and higher scores for newborns on the "APGAR" test. The framework for developing a voluntary doula certification program provided in Senate Bill 914 is patterned after the successful effort to develop a framework for community health workers.

MDACOG strongly supports the passage of Senate Bill 914 but would request an amendment which substitutes "a representative from the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists" for "one obstetrician–gynecologist licensed in the State" found on page 3, line 6 of the bill. This amendment will assure that the obstetrician and gynecologist appointed to the committee has the input from all of MDACOG's membership as well as access to the organization's national resources. With the noted amendment, MDACOG urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau
410-244-7000