



**Testimony Concerning HB 286**  
**“Public Health – Maternal Mortality Review Program – Stakeholders”**  
**Submitted to the House Health & Government Operations Committee**  
**February 5, 2020**

**Position: Support**

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 286, which would require that, to the extent practicable, the stakeholders convened under the Maternal Mortality Review Program reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of women most impacted by maternal deaths.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and families in Maryland. As the largest and oldest statewide child advocacy organization in Maryland, MFN is strongly committed to ensuring the health and well-being of children across our state.

Evidence of disparities in maternal health outcomes along racial lines, regardless of socio-economic status, exists both nationally and in Maryland. According to Maryland’s Maternal Mortality Review Program’s 2018 annual report, in the United States, black women have a maternal mortality rate 2.4 times greater than white women. In Maryland, there is an even greater disparity between the rates among black and white women. The 2012-2016 maternal mortality rate for black women in Maryland is 3.7 times that of white Maryland women.

While there is inherent value to Maryland’s existing system of maternal mortality review, however, more diverse review teams would provide unique benefits. A diverse stakeholder review panel would have the ability to better identify causes and address racial disparities in maternal mortality and could inform prevention and intervention strategies.

To ensure healthy pregnancies and healthy babies, MFN urges your favorable consideration of HB 286.