

March 4, 2020

TO: Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chairman
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Barbara Epke
Interim President and CEO
Maryland Patient Safety Center

RE: Letter of Support—House Bill 837—Public Health—Maternal Mortality and Morbidity—Implicit Bias Training and Study

I appreciate the opportunity to express support of House Bill 837 on behalf of the Maryland Patient Safety Center. The MPSC is an independent organization, and our reputation has shown us to be effective as a convener of healthcare providers without institutional bias to disseminate best practices, educate and train allied healthcare workers, and facilitate discussion in order to improve patient safety. MPSC has been engaged in maternal and infant health initiatives since 2006, working on improving outcomes related to OB Hemorrhage, NEC (necrotizing enterocolitis), Early Elective Deliveries and “Golden Hour” protocols for infants in distress. More recently, we have seen significant success from our collaborative initiatives focused on the reduction of first time C-sections and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome—establishing standardized treatment protocols for substance addicted infants.

Because of our extensive experience in maternal and infant health related initiatives, we were chosen to participate in the Maryland Maternal Health Innovation Program, a five-year initiative that started in October 2019 and aims to improve maternal health across the state of Maryland. This program is a collaboration between the Johns Hopkins University, Maryland Department of Health, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and the MPSC. This program is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through an award totaling \$10.3 million.

The Maryland Patient Safety Center strongly supports House Bill 837—Public Health—Maternal Mortality and Morbidity —Implicit Bias Training and Study. The focus of the bill is so clearly key to the goals of our program and will provide important feedback for the effectiveness of the initiatives we have planned to conduct, implicit bias training for perinatal health providers and the study of severe maternal morbidity in Maryland. In order to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity in Maryland, we must address the implicit bias that contributes to these health disparities. The focus of the bill will ensure accountability in this process of improving implicit bias in healthcare in Maryland.

In conclusion, the MPSC is in complete support of House Bill 837 and we are excited to assist the State with the initiative proposed, so that together we can improve the quality of care received by pregnant and postpartum women in Maryland. Should you wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

For more information, please contact:

Barbara Epke

bepke@marylandpatientsafety.org

410-540-9210