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Planned Parenthood of Maryland

**Committee:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Bill Number:** Senate Joint Resolution 5 - Comprehensive Health Education Program – Female Monthly Cycle Tracking for Adolescent Girls

**Hearing:** February 11, 2021

**Position:** Letter of Concern

Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) has significant concerns about *Senate Joint Resolution 5 – Comprehensive Health Education Program – Female Monthly Cycle Tracking for Adolescent Girls*. This resolution emphasizes the General Assembly's support of female monthly cycle tracking education for adolescent girls; and encourages the State Board of Education to update the comprehensive health education program to include certain standards for instruction on female monthly cycle tracking for adolescent girls.

PPM supports comprehensive health education programs that include comprehensive and clinically accurate information all methods of family planning, including fertility awareness methods (FAMs), common called natural family planning. PPM has concerns about SJ 5's **sole** emphasis on fertility awareness methods:

- FAMs are more challenging for individuals and their partners to use than other forms of birth control. It may not be a method well-suited for many adolescents. While PPM supports including discussion about FAMs in health education, we believe it is clinically inappropriate to emphasize this method for adolescents above other more effective family planning methods;
- FAMs do not prevent sexually transmitted infections. It is critical that health education emphasize the importance of using condoms, in combination with other methods of family planning;

As the nation's largest provider of sex education, Planned Parenthood believes that comprehensive sexuality education should include a wide range of topics and should be medically accurate, evidence-based, and age-appropriate to give individuals the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values that are needed to navigate relationships and manage one's own sexual health. While we support more

education about fertility awareness methods, we do not believe health education should emphasize this method over other family planning methods that may be more effective for adolescents. We encourage the Maryland General Assembly to support more comprehensive health education for Maryland students.