



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

2600 ST. PAUL STREET BALTIMORE, MD 21218

P: (410) 235-9000

F: (410) 235-8963

WWW.HEALTHCAREFORALL.COM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 923

Before the Senate Finance Committee

By Stephanie Klapper, Deputy Director, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc.

March 10, 2021

Madam Chair and Members of the Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 923, which would extend the length of time that eligible women can receive pregnancy-related Medicaid from 60 days postpartum to 12 months postpartum.

At least one-third of maternal deaths occur in the postpartum period,¹ and the disparity between white and Black maternal deaths in Maryland is currently getting worse, not better. Death rates during pregnancy and one-year post-partum are higher for Black women than for white women in Maryland.² This makes reducing maternal deaths an issue of health equity, and extending Medicaid coverage can help by preventing a loss of health coverage during the post-partum period. Physician groups recommend the extension of Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months in order to save lives, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American Osteopathic Association, and American Psychiatric Association.³

In addition, research shows that when parents are enrolled in Medicaid, their children are more likely to be insured and to have an annual well-child visit. Improved maternal access to health care can affect children in other ways—for example, by helping mothers to address maternal depression which can impact children's cognitive and social-emotional development.⁴ This legislation can therefore help promote children's health in addition to helping their mothers.

Thank you again to the Committee for your recognized efforts toward improving access to quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 923.

¹ CDC (2019). Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States, 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention, 13 States, 2013–2017. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6818e1.htm?s_cid=mm6818e1_w

² Maryland Department of Health (2019). Maryland Maternal Mortality Review 2019 Annual Report. <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Pages/mmr.aspx>

³ 2019. Helping Ensure Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies: Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity. <http://www.groupof6.org/content/dam/AAFP/documents/advocacy/prevention/women/ST-G6-MaternalMortality-091619.pdf>

⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2020). Expanding Medicaid for Parents Improves Coverage and Health for Both Parents and Children. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/expanding-medicaid-for-parents-improves-coverage-and-health-for-both-parents-and>