



HB0548 – Human Services – Trauma-Informed Care – Commission and Training

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and
Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 9, 2021 1:30 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges members of the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue **a favorable report on HB0548 - Human-Services – Trauma-Informed Care – Commission and Training**, sponsored by Delegate Robbyn Lewis.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. Trauma-informed care is important to achieve reproductive justice for all communities, particularly communities of color. In the present, forms of reproductive coercion, sexual trauma, birth control sabotage, and pregnancy coercion continue to impact many patients today.ⁱ We support trauma informed care to help provide a nurturing environment for care and to establish understanding of how widespread impact of how multiple traumas can affect an individual.

In Maryland, there is a history of women of color experiencing reproductive oppression which includes sterilization abuse and nonconsensual experimentation of low-income women of color. In 1978, the Greater Baltimore Medical Center ignored federal regulations and performed the most sterilizations in the state.ⁱⁱ This included many minors, and the practice was believed to be morally correct.ⁱⁱⁱ In the 1990s, in order to combat teen pregnancy in Baltimore, Norplant contraceptive was administered to teenagers, primarily within Black communities.^{iv} However, this was largely viewed as a method of population control within the Black community, rather than birth control.^v Two decades later, long-acting reversible contraception-counseling and care remains a big issue particularly amongst communities of color, due to historical trauma and mistrust.^{vi}

Trauma-informed care is not only beneficial for reproductive healthcare—it is essential for accessing a multitude of services. Many populations who are often ignored in conversations around trauma informed care like undocumented immigrants, incarcerated populations, disabled populations, and youth in detention will benefit from having this approach to accessing reproductive healthcare and other social services.^{vii} These populations face substantial barriers in having their trauma believed, having their opinions about their bodies heard, and even being provided proper access to public benefits. Through a trauma informed approach, public services in all sectors can be provided in a more sensitive manner.

HB0548 helps to implement trauma-informed delivery of state services, which can help standardize and set the model for care delivery across the state. HB0458 also mandates at least two staff members several statewide agencies to participate in a formal course of trauma-informed care each year. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0548**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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- ⁱ "Reproductive Justice." Connections: A Biannual Publication of Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Problems. NCDSV, 2013. http://ncdsv.org/images/WCSAP_Connections-Reproductive-Justice_Summer2013.pdf.
- ⁱⁱ "Maryland." Maryland Eugenics, n.d. <https://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/MD/MD.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kluchin, Rebecca M. *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980 (Critical Issues in Health and Medicine)*. Rutgers University Press, 2009.
- ^{iv} "Bold Attack on Teen-Age Pregnancy : Baltimore Offers the Norplant Contraceptive--in an Effort to Reduce Unwanted Pregnancies." Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, December 7, 1992. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-12-07-me-1151-story.html>.
- ^v Valentine, Paul W. "IN BALTIMORE, A TUMULTUOUS HEARING ON NORPLANT." The Washington Post. WP Company, February 10, 1993. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1993/02/10/in-baltimore-a-tumultuous-hearing-on-norplant/298d0273-332e-4d1f-9624-5aadb3ec1efd/>.
- ^{vi} Board, Baltimore Sun Editorial. "As Long-Lasting Birth Control Becomes More Popular, Make Sure It's Not Forced on Low-Income Women." baltimoresun.com. Baltimore Sun, May 31, 2019. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0103-longterm-birth-control-20181219-story.html>.
- ^{vii} McDonald-Mosley, Raegan. "Reproductive Justice and Patient-Centered Counseling." *MDH Reproductive Health Roundtable Virtual Series*. Lecture presented at the Reproductive Justice and Patient-Centered Counseling, July 2, 2020.