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March 8, 2022

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley  
Chair, Finance Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: Senate Bill 778 (Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act): Support

The Office of the Attorney General supports Senate Bill 778. The bill would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide comprehensive medical care and other health care services to noncitizen pregnant women who would qualify for the Program but for their immigration status and their children up to the age of 1 year, subject to the limitations of the state budget. Under the bill, the Maryland Department of Health must apply for a waiver from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that maximizes federal funding and the individuals who would be eligible for the benefit. Maryland already has expanded the benefit to lawfully residing immigrants. The bill would expand the benefit to all other noncitizen pregnant women and their children through the age of 1 year, an important step in improving maternal/child health morbidity and mortality (women who receive no prenatal care are 3–4 times more likely to have a pregnancy-related death than women who do).

<https://avalere.com/insights/reducing-maternal-mortality-among-women-of-color>

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants/>

We ask the committee to give the bill a favorable report.

cc: Senator Lam, Sponsor