



# primary care coalition

making  
health care  
happen

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TO: The Honorable Shane E Pendergrass, Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Richard C. Bohrer, Chair, External Affairs Committee, Primary Care Coalition

DATE: March 4, 2022

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT – HB 1080, Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act)**

The Primary Care Coalition (PCC) works with clinics, hospitals, health care providers, and other community partners to coordinate health services for our most vulnerable neighbors. The PCC administers a variety of programs that provide a continuum of health services for low-income, uninsured and underinsured, ethnically diverse individuals including Montgomery County's health safety-net programs—Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids—which together serve the health care needs of some 30,000 low-income individuals. The PCC supports HB 1080 because every person deserves access to lifesaving prenatal and postpartum care regardless of immigration status.

In Maryland in 2020:

- 1 in 7 infants was born to a woman receiving late or no prenatal care
- 1 in 6 infants was born to a woman receiving inadequate prenatal care<sup>1</sup>

From 2013 to 2017, 77% of pregnancy-related deaths in Maryland were preventable or potentially preventable.<sup>2</sup> Access to adequate prenatal care and postpartum care is transformative especially for women of color where racial and socioeconomic disparities still exist. In Maryland, mortality due to pregnancy related complications among Black and Latino mothers is nearly three times higher than white mothers.<sup>2</sup> Do not let the politics of immigration overshadow the importance of ensuring that babies, natural born citizens of the United States, have a strong start in life through appropriate health care for themselves and their mothers.

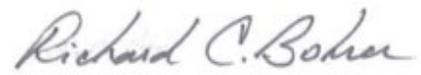
Passage of HB 1080 would be a step toward reducing inequity in maternal and child health inequities in Maryland. For this reason, PCC urges the Committee to vote in favor of HB 1080 and expand Medicaid to all mothers during and after pregnancy.

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<sup>1</sup> Prenatal Care Maryland | PeriStats | March of Dimes. (n.d.). Retrieved March 3, 2022, from <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/ViewTopic.aspx?reg=24&top=5&lev=0&slev=4>

<sup>2</sup> MDMOM: Maryland Maternal Mortality Review Program. (n.d.). Retrieved March 3, 2022, from <https://mdmom.org/data>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard C. Bohrer".

Richard C. Bohrer  
Chair, External Affairs Committee  
Primary Care Coalition