



END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

Testimony on 1080 Healthy Babies Equity Act of 2022 Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee,

We are End Medical Debt Maryland, a statewide coalition of nearly 70 organizations and dozens of volunteers. Our members are labor unions, faith leaders, patients, health justice advocates, consumer rights proponents, lawyers, healthcare workers, and community members impacted by medical debt. Collectively, we represent over 350,000 Marylanders. Our coalition's goal is clear: we fight for legislation that will ultimately end medical debt. **We endorse HB1080: Healthy Babies Equity Act**, and we urge the committee to issue a FAVORABLE report.

HB1080/SB778 would expand eligibility for prenatal and postpartum care through Medicaid to all pregnant people, regardless of status. This change in eligibility would remove the barrier that only allows pregnant non-citizens to receive Emergency Medicaid, which only covers labor and delivery. The bill would require the state to submit a state innovation waiver (under the 1115 of the Social Security Act) to allow Maryland to make this change to eligibility.

End Medical Debt Maryland supports this legislation because in Maryland, on average, it costs between \$13,458-\$18,414¹ to give birth. These numbers do not account for complications during labor and delivery or pre & post natal care, which can add additional thousands to the medical bill. Further, access to prenatal care allows maternal health providers to effectively and quickly identify potential birth complications that may require speciality care soon after delivery. Immigration status should not be a barrier to accessing natal care because no one should have to choose between accumulating medical debt and having a child. Please vote yes on this bill.

1

<https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/10/12/how-much-do-common-medical-procedures-cost-in-maryland-it-depends-on-the-hospital/>

Brige Dumais

brigette.dumais@1199.org

Submitted on behalf of End Medical Debt Maryland