



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 669

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services - Coverage

House Health & Government Operations Committee

1:30pm

February 16, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

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Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 669, which would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) to cover certain doula services. It would also require a provider to meet certain requirements to provide doula services in Maryland Medicaid.

HB 669 would codify COMAR 10.09.39 Doula Services, expanding Maryland Medicaid to cover doula services for pregnant and postpartum low-income Marylanders. Doulas are non-clinical birth workers trained to provide emotional, physical and information support to pregnant people during the prenatal, birth and postpartum period. Despite research supporting that doula care can improve pregnancy and infant health outcomes, doula care is often inaccessible for low-income birthing people due to the cost. HB 669 would extend this medically necessary care to low-income Marylanders, aiding the State's efforts to eliminate maternal mortality and improve birth outcomes.

We thank the Department of Health for finally covering doula care for Medicaid beneficiaries. **MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 669.**

***Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP)** is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*