



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 669 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 669 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage. HB 669 would require MDH to reimburse medically necessary doula services during pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum services within the state of Maryland, subject to limitations determined by MDH.

The Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) committed \$8 million in annual funding through fiscal year 2025 under the Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy (SIHIS). The funding will be used to support Medicaid initiatives to reduce the severe maternal morbidity rate and pediatric asthma. MDH committed to using a portion of the HSCRC money to cover doula services for all Medicaid participants and offset the state general fund impact. Additionally, funding through Medicaid will create the opportunity to receive federal match funding to nearly double the investment. MDH submitted regulations for doula services with an expected *Maryland Register* publication date in late February 2022.

MDH met with the sponsor and offered two technical amendments. The first amendment allows for flexibility in the modification of the program without the need for future legislation. The second amendment to avoid confusion about services delivered by doulas in the home and “home visiting services” which are a separate and distinct benefit.

MDH stands committed to reducing the maternal morbidity rate in the State. In collaboration with HSCRC through SIHIS, these initiatives will help support pregnant and postpartum women and improve health outcomes and meet the interests of HB 669. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Shek, Director of Governmental Affairs, at heather.shek@maryland.gov or (443) 695-4218.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis R. Schrader".

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary

AMENDMENT 1:

On page 3 strike beginning with “within” in line 10 down through “delivery” in line 11 and substitute “**AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF LABOR AND DELIVERY AS DEFINED BY THE DEPARTMENT;**”

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 5, strike beginning with “and” in line 8 down through “services” in line 9