



**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill:** House Bill 245 – Program for Preventing HIV Infection for Rape Victims – Alterations and Repeal of Sunset

**Hearing Date:** February 9, 2022

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives supports *House Bill 245 – Program for Preventing HIV Infection for Rape Victims- Alterations and Repeal and Sunset*. This bill will continue the Program for Preventing HIV Infection for rape survivors by removing the sunset date and turning it into a permanent program.

ACNM supports initiatives that ensure rape survivors are able to access healthcare. Rape is a long-term risk factor for HIV acquisition and rape survivors need both immediate and long-term HIV prevention and care.<sup>1</sup> There is currently no cure for HIV infection, which is why continued care and prevention are incredibly important. HIV targets the immune system and weakens people’s defense against infections and some types of cancers.<sup>2</sup> The Program for Preventing HIV Infection is key to the prevention of HIV infections in rape survivors. This bill would remove the \$750,000 cap paid to physicians, qualified healthcare professionals, and hospitals to support rape survivors. By removing this cap on funding and repealing the sunset date, rape survivors will continue to be protected and provided care under this program.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at [schitalia@policypartners.net](mailto:schitalia@policypartners.net).

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<sup>1</sup> [https://journals.lww.com/aidsonline/Fulltext/2021/03150/Increase\\_in\\_HIV\\_incidence\\_in\\_women\\_exposed\\_to\\_rape.12.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/aidsonline/Fulltext/2021/03150/Increase_in_HIV_incidence_in_women_exposed_to_rape.12.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>