



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: Senate Bill 166 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Doula Services - Coverage

Hearing Date: March 30, 2022

Position: Support as Amended

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports, as amended, *Senate Bill 166 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Doula Services - Coverage*. The bill would make doula reimbursement into a permanent program under Medicaid. Medicaid is about to launch a pilot reimbursement program and has been working collaboratively with the doula, consumer, and provider community. The bill largely reflects regulations that have been proposed for the pilot program.

ACNM strongly supports the presence of doulas as their role is complementary to that of midwives, nurses, and other health professionals. Doulas provide both physical and emotional support to the families they serve. Doulas also empower women to communicate their needs and perceptions and actualize their dreams of a healthy, positive birth experience. The positive effects of doula care have been found to be greater for women who were socially disadvantaged and low-income.¹ For these reasons, ACNM strongly supports the presence of doulas in hospitals and birth centers.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

¹<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727/#:~:text=Doulas%20are%20trained%20to%20provide,and%20have%20less%20stressful%20births.>