



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 812:
Reproductive Health Services – Protected Information and Insurance Requirements.**

TO: Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Sharon Blugis, Interim Executive Director, Pro-Choice Maryland

DATE: Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Pro-Choice Maryland is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates for policies that protect reproductive freedom and that advance reproductive justice. **Pro-Choice Maryland strongly supports the right of ALL individuals to full bodily autonomy and to unequivocal control over their own health and healthcare decisions including their private health records.**

The campaign to intimidate providers and patients in Maryland depends on having access to information about reproductive health care provided in our state. Under electronic health record systems, protected health information – including reproductive health records - flows easily between states. Information sharing is allowed by law if it is related to coordination of care among a patient’s providers. Under most circumstances, care coordination improves the health outcomes of patients. But in the case of reproductive health, information sharing is putting reproductive health providers and patients at great risk.

This legislation provides extra layers of protection for reproductive health information in electronic health record systems, often called health information exchanges, The legislation also ensures Maryland’s state government protects personal information of patient and providers that may be stored in state databases.

Reproductive freedom in Maryland depends on making sure we do not expose the personal information or our providers and patients. Just recently, an abortion facility was attacked by a homemade bomb in Illinois. And that is just one of example of the threats faced by reproductive health providers and patients.

We applaud this common-sense effort to further enshrine the right to reproductive freedom in Maryland and **we strongly urge the committee to lead the way, honor abortion access as essential, vital healthcare, and to return a favorable report on House Bill 812.**