



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 1101 – Maryland Maternity Care Access Program, Fund, and Income Tax Checkoff – Establishment – Letter of Opposition

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of opposition for House Bill (HB) 1101 - Maryland Maternity Care Access Program, Fund, and Income Tax Checkoff - Establishment. HB 1101 establishes the Maryland Maternity Care Access Program in MDH to develop and sustain pregnancy support centers in the State. The bill also establishes the Maryland Maternity Care Access Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund and establishes an income tax checkoff system for voluntary contributions to the Fund.

Both the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognize that access to abortion care services is an integral component of full-spectrum reproductive services, and should be integrated as a part of mainstream medical care.^{1,2} By contrast, HB 1101 requires that the pregnancy support centers developed and sustained by the newly created Maternity Care Access Program do not refer, induce, or assist in the performance of abortions.

MDH notes that HB 1101 also conflicts with the requirements of federal funding and may put the State at risk of losing funding. MDH is awarded approximately \$4 million per year to administer the Federal Title X program in Maryland. Recipients of Title X federal funds are required to ensure that counseling to pregnant clients include information on all pregnancy options, including abortion services.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

¹<https://www.acog.org/clinical-information/policy-and-position-statements/statements-of-policy/2022/abortion-policy#:~:text=ACOG%20advocates%20to%20improve%20access,efforts%20restricting%20access%20to%20abortion.>

² <https://reproductiverights.gov/>