Date: March 6, 2024
To: Health and Government Operations Committee
Reference: **House Bill 1036**- Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Maternal Fetal Medicine Services Reimbursement
Position: Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Committee Members,
On behalf of LifeBridge Health, we appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts and support for HB1036. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital), a freestanding medical facility in West Baltimore; and Center for Hope a center of excellence focused on provided hope and services for trauma survivors in Baltimore City.

The Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine within LifeBridge Health provides high-risk obstetric care and/or consultation and is immediately available to provide intrapartum or antepartum medical care. Along with genetic and diabetic counselors, and nurses, who specialize in caring for special pregnancies, our perinatologists offer expertise and state-of-the-art technology to monitor and manage complicated pregnancies. The Maternal-Fetal Testing Center provides complete prenatal assessment, testing, genetic counseling, and fetal therapy.

From the moment a prenatal diagnosis is made before conception, the Institute for Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Sinai Hospital offers comprehensive care and support to women facing high-risk pregnancies. In addition to our board-certified maternal-fetal medicine (MFM) specialists. They are committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care to women and their families—before, during and after pregnancy (including follow-up care for both mother and baby)—in a comfortable environment. Using state-of-the-art technology, our specialists monitor and manage potential medical issues during high-risk pregnancies including:

- Advanced maternal age
- Birth defects
- Fetuses at risk for stillbirth
- Chronic conditions (such as high blood pressure and diabetes)
- Multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets or more)

In Maryland, we continue to face challenges and barriers in addressing maternal mortality. There have been great strides in Maryland to improve the continuum of care, however early detection is critical.

Maternal-Fetal Medicine is an important part of the maternal management to identify concerns and issues during the prenatal phase of a mother's birth experience. However, several of the services rendered under Maternal-Fetal Medicine are not reimbursed at par with Medicare rates. To that end, we would recommend the state review parity among all payers, to ensure policies and access to services are consistent.

It is essential that federal and state health care policies are designed and implemented to improve access to maternity care and invest in maternal health. State Medicaid agencies that use the global obstetric codes have an opportunity to prioritize maternal health by updating their payment rates to match the rates provided across payers.

We support a process to further review the inaccuracy of the of associated codes and develop a better approach for equitable reimbursement for these critical services.

For more information, please contact:
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