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Subject: Testimony in Support of HOUSE BILL 482

To: The Maryland General Assembly, Judiciary Committee

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 482, introduced by Delegates Simpson, Bartlett, Bouchat, Ciliberti, Crutchfield, Fair, Foley, Guzzone, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Love, McCaskill, Pasteur, Patterson, Pippy, Taylor, Tomlinson, Valentine, Wilkins, and Woods. This bill, titled "Criminal Injuries Compensation Board – Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation," is a critical step in addressing the needs of victims and ensuring their access to essential forensic examinations and healthcare services.

House Bill 482 proposes important amendments to Article – Criminal Procedure, specifically focusing on Sections 11–801(a) and (b), 11–816.1, 11–1007, and 11–1102 of the Annotated Code of Maryland. reimbursement to physicians, qualified healthcare providers, and hospitals for forensic examinations and healthcare services rendered to victims of nonfatal strangulation without charge.

The inclusion of nonfatal strangulation in the scope of reimbursement is a significant advancement in recognizing the **severity of injuries, including death, and the potential long-term health consequences** of such incidents. This amendment aligns with a comprehensive approach to victim care, ensuring that survivors receive the necessary support and services to aid in their recovery and address significant safety issues after nonfatal strangulation. The amendments under HB 482 will also remove barriers to care for so many victims who can't seek emergency medical service for fear of retaliation or further harm by their intimate partners after seeking help because the risk of discovery will not be tied to billing for services (often a concern with victims). Offering access to victims of nonfatal strangulation without the concern for payment is a critical step to addressing patient concerns related to payment/billing. Ensuring access to care offers the opportunity to address the patient's immediate medical and safety needs while mitigating further physical and emotional sequela after nonfatal strangulation.

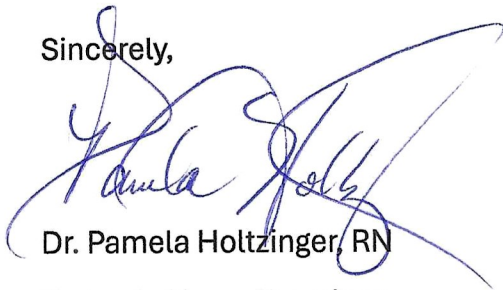
The proposed changes to Section 11–1007 outline the eligible expenses for forensic examinations, emphasizing the importance of immediate and follow-up medical care for victims of nonfatal strangulation. By extending reimbursement to cover a range of services,

including physical and sexual assault forensic examinations, emergency hospital treatment, and follow-up medical testing, House Bill 482 addresses the complexity of the needs of survivors and promotes safeguards to facilitate prompt and comprehensive treatment for victims.

House Bill 482 reflects a commitment to supporting survivors of nonfatal strangulation, acknowledging the unique challenges they face, and providing a framework for comprehensive and compassionate care. I urge the Committee on Judiciary to endorse and advance this crucial legislation for the safety and well-being of victims in Maryland.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I appreciate your dedication to promoting justice and ensuring the welfare of survivors and our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pamela Holtzinger', is written over a large, stylized blue scribble that extends across the signature line and slightly above it.

Dr. Pamela Holtzinger, RN

Forensic Nurse Examiner

February 2, 2024