



TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 156

Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services - Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage

Before the Senate Finance Committee

By: Suzanne Schlattman, Deputy Director, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
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Chair Beidle and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit supportive testimony for this bill. Thank you Senator Karen Lewis Young for introducing this important bill.

We support establishing a universal newborn home visitation program for all Marylanders because of the program's potential to improve coverage rates and advance more equitable access to quality affordable health care for all. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our individual organization, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc., as we have not reviewed this legislation with the full Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition.

Our staff had the pleasure of meeting with the Family Connects program this past summer to learn more about the pilot program in Frederick, Prince Georges and Baltimore, MD. We understand that Family Connects fills a gap in services for families from the time of delivery to 12 weeks postpartum. In addition to the impressive measurable improvements in maternal and child health and reductions in ER utilization in random control trials, significant qualitative feedback indicates strong consumer support for sustaining and expanding on the program.

This program serves all families, regardless of income or background. In doing so, it has reduces stigma and increases participation among populations with historic disparities in health care access by age, race and ethnicity. It aligns with the goals of the new AHEAD Model and can help more Marylanders take advantage of health care services and coverage options

Thank you for your careful consideration of this issue. We urge a favorable review.