



COALITION
for a Healthier Frederick County

January 27, 2025

Maryland State Senate Finance Committee

RE: SB0156 Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services – Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage

Dear Finance Committee,

I am writing this testimony to express the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County's support for Senate Bill 0156.

The Coalition serves as the Local Health Improvement Coalition for Frederick County and has identified addressing and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a community health priority for the last 9 years as part of our triennial Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process. Universal newborn nurse home visiting is an evidence-based model for preventing ACEs. In particular, the Family Connects model has been shown to reduce incidences of ACEs in communities it is implemented in, and therefore improve health outcomes and quality of life for families over the course of their life and for future generations. For example, there is a 39% reduction in child protective services investigations for up to 5 years after a nurse home visit.

The Frederick County ACEs Workgroup, managed and supported by the Coalition, identified, and shared this information with our community as a model for our community to fill a gap in care, reduce stigma for accessing services by offering the program universally and thereby increase health equity and complement existing services. The ACEs Workgroup then successfully applied for American Rescue Plan Act funds through Frederick County Government to launch a universal newborn nurse home visiting program working with Frederick Health Hospital.

Frederick Health Hospital launched Family Connects Frederick County in 2023. Family Connects Frederick County has been a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families, and families across all races, ethnicities, and insurance types accepted the visit.

As a member of the Family Connects Frederick County Community Partner Council, the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County urges you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for implementing state wide universal newborn nurse home visiting services so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this [evidence-based model](#) which [reduces maternal health disparities](#) and improves maternal and [infant health](#).

Our organization participates in the Family Connects Community Partner Council to ensure synergy between the program and the [Local Health Improvement Process \(LHIP\)](#) for Frederick County.

We work closely with Family Connects in the following ways:

- Sharing information learned from the triennial [Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

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- Inviting the program to engage with LHIP Workgroups as appropriate. For example, the Type 2 Diabetes Workgroup is working with the Family Connects Frederick County team on a gestational diabetes awareness campaign they are developing.
- Advocating to our partner organizations and volunteers to support awareness of Family Connects Frederick County and to get involved where needed.

Having Family Connects permanently in our community would mean that we can continue to reduce ACEs and improve lifelong health outcomes for all Frederick County families.

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from universal newborn nurse home visiting. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Thank you!

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