

SB0156_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0156 - FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0156, **Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services - Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage**

This bill is a priority for the County Executive and County Council of Maryland.

Frederick County has been a leader in Maryland in doing all it can to increase maternal and infant health. The county looked at health disparities in various segments of the population, especially in BIPOC and Latinx communities, and developed a program to address and remedy these issues.

Frederick believes that this program, implemented state-wide, will have overwhelmingly positive consequences for mothers and infants. In pursuit of that aim this bill will require the Maryland Department of Health to establish a program to provide universal newborn nurse home visiting services to all families with newborns residing in the State. It mandates participation for insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations that provide certain health benefits under certain insurance policies or contracts to provide certain coverage and reimbursement for universal newborn nurse home visiting services. Finally, it will collect data documenting the results of this program implementation requiring a report on the status of newborn nurse home visiting services by December 1, 2026.

Frederick visited 65% of the eligible families, proportionately representing all races, insurance types and ethnicities, out of those families considered for participation. Seed funding was provided from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Lifesaving interventions included recognition and treatment for high blood pressure, postpartum depression and anxiety, and infant respiratory distress. Frederick Health *Helping Growing Families Thrive*¹ makes clear the benefits this program has brought to Frederick County that can and should be done throughout the state of Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0156.

¹ <https://www.frederickhealth.org/news/2024/december/helping-growing-families-thrive/>