



"Advocating for Nurse Practitioners since 1992"

February 10, 2025

Bill: SB 411- Health Insurance- Postpartum Depression Screening – Required Coverage and Authorized Cost-Sharing

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the committee:

On behalf of over 850 members of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM), and the over 8,000 certified Nurse Practitioners licensed to practice in Maryland, I am writing in support of SB 411. Please consider the following information in your decision making regarding this bill:

As healthcare professionals and advocates, we firmly believe that the mental health of mothers following childbirth is an essential aspect of maternal well-being, and that postpartum depression screening is a critical step in ensuring the health and safety of new parents and their infants.

Postpartum depression is a prevalent and serious condition that affects approximately one in seven women after childbirth. However, it is widely underdiagnosed, often because of the stigma surrounding mental health or the lack of awareness among both patients and healthcare providers. Without appropriate screening, many mothers may not receive the support they need, which can have lasting consequences for both the mother and baby.


Research has shown that early detection of postpartum depression through screening, paired with timely intervention, significantly improves outcomes for both maternal mental health and child development. As such, universal postpartum depression screening should be seen as an essential preventive measure in the overall care of mothers. In fact, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) both strongly recommend that all new mothers be screened for postpartum depression at least once, during the postpartum period. Traditionally postpartum depression screening has occurred in OB follow up visits traditionally at a six-week postpartum visit, however the American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends that postpartum

depression screening should be conducted at the 1-, 2-, 4-, and 6-month well-child visits for new mothers.

By covering postpartum depression screenings at both OB and well child pediatric checkups, insurance companies can play an essential role in improving the quality of maternal care. Addressing postpartum depression can reduce healthcare costs in the long run by lowering the risk of chronic mental health issues, preventing adverse child development outcomes, and promoting healthier families overall. Furthermore, this coverage aligns with the commitment to promote both the physical as well as mental health of Maryland women after childbirth.

For the above reasons, we ask for a favorable report for SB 411. If there are further questions, please reach out to our NPAM Executive Director, Malinda Duke at NPAMexdir@npedu.com

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malinda D. Duke CRNP-PC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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