

February 9, 2025

Maryland Senate
Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Chesapeake Chapter, we are writing to express our **support of SB 411 Health Insurance - Postpartum Depression Screening - Required Coverage and Authorized Cost Sharing.**

As pediatric 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. Postpartum depression is a prevalent and serious condition that affects approximately 1 in 7 women after childbirth. Unfortunately, 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 her child.

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. Consequently, 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) all strongly recommend that all new mothers be screened for postpartum depression at least once during the postpartum period. Traditionally, postpartum depression screening has occurred during OB follow-up visits, typically at a six-week postpartum checkup. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends that postpartum depression screening be conducted at the 1-, 2-, 4-, and 6-month well-child visits for new mothers.

Postpartum depression screenings at both OB and well child pediatric check ups, will improve the quality of maternal care. Addressing postpartum depression can reduce healthcare costs by lowering the risk of chronic mental health issues, preventing adverse child development outcomes, and promoting healthier families overall.

For these reasons the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their support to support to SB 411 Health Insurance - Postpartum Depression Screening - Required Coverage and Authorized Cost Sharing. and requests a favorable report.

The pediatric advanced practice nurses of your state are grateful to you for your attention to these crucial issues. The Chesapeake Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners membership includes over 200 primary and acute care pediatric nurse practitioners who are committed to improving the health and advocating for Maryland's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Chesapeake Chapter legislative committee or president, Yvette Laboy at mdchesnapnapleg@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

Yvette Laboy

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