

TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
Assistant Director, Maryland Government Affairs

DATE: January 23, 2025

RE: SB1 Legally Protected Health Care - Reproductive, Fertility Preservation, and Contraceptive Treatment and Services (IVF and Contraception Shield Act of 2025)

SB1

Favorable

Johns Hopkins supports **SB1 IVF and Contraception Shield Act**. This bill expands the definition of "legally protected health care," in selected sections of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to cover IVF, all reproductive services, fertility preservation, and contraceptive treatments and services. This change will provide much needed protection for patients and providers and therefore maintain access to medically necessary health care.

We support the omission of Health General 4-301 from the sections of the Annotated Code of Maryland where the definition of "legally protected health care" is expanded. As the Committee is aware, a significant amount of work has gone in to protecting the privacy of patients' reproductive health information in recent years. The progress was challenging but meaningful and we would hate for anything to derail that work. The difficulty was balancing the intent of protecting patients' privacy, while also ensuring providers had access to enough information to continue to deliver quality care. Additionally, the definition of "legally protected health care" in Health General 4-301 already allows for expansion and flexibility through the Secretary at the recommendation of the Protected Health Care Commission established under that Section. This legislation does not propose any changes to that article, and therefore, as written does not impact previous work.

As a major employer in the State of Maryland with a presence in the National Capital Region and in Florida, and as a leading provider of clinical care, including health and well-being services to our students, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine take seriously our obligation to the many populations we serve. We remain firmly committed to providing the safest and best possible care to our patients, and to supporting all aspects of women's health and reproductive rights.

To the fullest extent allowed under the law, our institutions have continued to be guided by the evidence-based best practices established by medical and public health faculty experts and practitioners, which make clear that access to safe, legal abortion is critical for the health of individuals, families, and communities. Accordingly, we greatly appreciate this legislation which provides necessary legal protections to our health care providers and patients and helps to ensure that access to reproductive healthcare is not criminalized.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **SB1**.