

Maureen Wambui

7827 Rolling View Ave, Nottingham, MD, 21236

Maureen.w.m.2030@gmail.com

03/04/2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee

Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

Support Testimony for SB0965 – Public Health - Women’s Health Care Data – Report

Hearing Date: March 06, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, Parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to testify to and express my strong **support** for SB0965, a bill that will enhance transparency in women’s healthcare costs and promote data-driven policymaking to improve health outcomes for all Marylanders.

For many immigrant and low-income women, the cost of essential reproductive health services, such as pregnancy care, birth, postpartum care, and abortion, can be a significant barrier to accessing the care they need. Without clear data on these costs, we risk deepening existing disparities and failing to address the financial burdens that disproportionately impact women of color, immigrants, and underserved communities.

SB0965 is a necessary step toward healthcare equity and affordability for several reasons:

1. Transparency in Healthcare Costs

- By requiring the Maryland Department of Health to report on the costs of women’s health services, SB0965 ensures that policymakers and the public have accurate, comprehensive data to identify cost disparities across the state.
- Many immigrant and minority women struggle with unpredictable medical expenses. Public access to this data will allow for better consumer awareness and financial planning regarding maternal and reproductive health services.

2. Data-Driven Policy Decisions

- Without concrete data, we cannot effectively advocate for lower costs or improved funding for critical services.

- The bill will help lawmakers identify cost trends and gaps in access, enabling targeted interventions to reduce financial barriers and improve health outcomes.

3. Potential for Cost Reduction & Expanded Access

- High healthcare costs discourage women, especially those from low-income and immigrant backgrounds from seeking necessary care.
- If the report reveals rising or inequitable costs, the state will have the evidence needed to implement cost-reduction strategies, such as expanded insurance coverage, subsidies, or direct state funding for maternal and reproductive health services.

4. Addresses Health Equity for Immigrant & Minority Communities

- Data collection will highlight whether communities of color, rural areas, or immigrant populations are facing disproportionate financial burdens in accessing care.
- This report is an opportunity to ensure all Maryland women—regardless of immigration status or economic background—can afford the healthcare they need.

SB0965 does not create new regulations or impose additional costs on healthcare providers. Instead, it provides essential information to guide responsible, fair, and inclusive policymaking that benefits all Marylanders. I urge the committee to pass this bill to ensure that women's healthcare remains transparent, accessible, and equitable for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Wambui