
BILL NO: House Bill 1357
TITLE: Public Health - Reproductive Health Care Data - Report
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
HEARING DATE: February 27, 2025
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women throughout the state. We oppose House Bill 1357 and its requirement that the Maryland Department of Health collect and compile annual data on the costs of birth, postpartum care, pregnancy care, and abortion in the state as another attempt to subjugate reproductive freedom as codified in the Maryland constitution.

To obtain such data, the Department of Health would have to establish a data collection system for providers to report the requested information to the Department. The Women's Law Center of Maryland is opposed to this legislation for the following reasons:

- **Public Health Data is Already Available:** The bill presumes that there is no information available about reproductive healthcare data in Maryland. However, the Guttmacher Institute routinely collects this information and calculates pregnancy-related rates in every state. In addition, the Society for Family Planning also collects this data in partnership with providers, and its "We Count" reports track the impact of the Dobbs decision on the provision of abortion care within each state.
- **Public Health Survey Data is More Accurate:** When analyzing pregnancy-related data, the Guttmacher Institute does not use data from mandated state abortion reporting systems. According to Guttmacher, "abortions are almost always underreported to the state surveillance systems." Because of this discrepancy, Guttmacher uses its own survey data.
- **Intimidating to Patients:** Patient's fears about the confidentiality of reproductive health services are very real and merited as abortion opponents have publicized confidential and highly personal information about recipients of reproductive health care on websites and to the press. Unfortunately, this creates a uniquely hostile environment for patients unlike any other environment in which individuals seek healthcare services. Mandated reporting for women's reproductive healthcare services, especially since there are no such mandates for any other type of health care service, would only validate their fears.

We oppose HB 1357 and its visceral attempts to undermine and delegitimize Maryland's legacy as a leader in reproductive freedom. HB 1357 mandates data be reported in aggregate, meaning it does not intend to help address inequities in the system. It only looks at female reproductive data, so men's reproductive health – including erectile dysfunction, vasectomies, etc. – are purposefully excluded from governmental review.

The Women's Law Center strongly urges an unfavorable report for HB 1357, and all legislation designed to inculcate an environment of fear around medical decisions and the right to assert one's bodily autonomy.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.