



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill:	House Bill 334 - Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services – Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage
Hearing Date:	January 29, 2024
Position:	Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 334 – Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services – Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage*. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop a universal nurse home visiting program. State-regulated private insurers are also required to provide coverage of similar services.

MCHS is a network of federally qualified health centers providing primary, behavioral, and dental care to underserved communities. We support evidence-based programs that reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes. Maryland should invest in home visiting programs for new parents.

Under the legislation, the Maryland Department of Health would develop a universal home visiting program, based on a model endorsed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services called Family Connect. Under the program, a nurse makes a home visit to new parents within the first three weeks of a newborn’s life and also makes a follow-up visit. Research has demonstrated the Program significantly reduces the need for emergency care in hospitals and emergency rooms. The Program also demonstrated the potential to improve maternal mental health by identifying resources and making referrals.ⁱ

MCHS looks forward to working with the Department and other stakeholders on delineating how the program would be implemented. Coordination with other healthcare providers will be the key to its success.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/effectiveness/Family%20Connects%20In%20Brief>