



February 21, 2025

**COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
**BILL:** HB 1380 – Health Care Facilities – Hospitals and Freestanding Birthing Centers – Perinatal Care Standards  
**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

**The Foundation is pleased to support HB 1380 – Health Care Facilities – Hospitals and Freestanding Birthing Centers – Perinatal Care Standards.** This bill would require the Maryland Department of Health to adopt regulations that establish minimum perinatal care standards for hospitals that provide obstetrical services and for freestanding birthing centers, as a condition of their licensure.

Much work remains to solve the maternal health crisis we are experiencing in the United States, particularly for mothers of color. Nationally, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women.<sup>i</sup> Here in Maryland, Black mothers are more likely than White mothers to have a preterm birth, and more than twice as likely to have their babies experience low birth weight or infant mortality.<sup>ii</sup> Establishing minimum perinatal care standards for Maryland hospitals, and for future freestanding birthing centers that would expand access to and options for maternity care in our state, would strengthen maternal health care for all and lead to better health outcomes for birthing people and their children.

For the last several years, the Horizon Foundation has advocated for policies and programs that would implement a full continuum of reproductive health services in our community and in our state. We strongly believe everyone should have access to high quality, respectful maternity care. For this reason, the Foundation **SUPPORTS HB 1380 and urges a FAVORABLE report.** Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>i</sup> The Network for Public Health Law, 2023.

<sup>ii</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/interactive/womens-health-profiles/maryland/maternal-infant-health/>

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Christopher Fortune  
CHAIR

Lisa Pearson  
VICE CHAIR

Gopi Suri  
SECRETARY

Mark Cissell  
TREASURER

Nikki Highsmith Vernick  
PRESIDENT & CEO

Jonathan Ilson Ahn, Esq.

Yvonne Commodore-  
Mensah, Ph.D

Juliet Gilliam

Catherine Hamel

Brian Hepburn, M.D.

Louis Hutt III

Sekou Murphy

Yvette Rooks, M.D.

Scott Rose

Celián Valero-Colón, M.D.

David Wolf

Lanlan Xu, Ph.D