



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB 674

March 20, 2025

**TO:** Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** Senate Bill 674 – Maryland Commission for Women - Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter Birth Control

**POSITION:** **Support**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 674.

SB 674 would create the Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter (OTC) Birth Control under the Maryland Commission for Women to study and advance access to over-the-counter birth control for Maryland residents. The collaborative would then make recommendations regarding the implementation of State coverage requirements for OTC birth control at pharmacies; advancement of point-of-sale coverage options; public health initiatives to increase access to OTC birth control; and education and engagement of consumers, health care practitioners, public health and community programs, and health care industry stakeholders.

Since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, the security of women's reproductive freedom and rights have been under threat across the United States. While initially the attacks on these rights were limited to abortion care in the aftermath of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the regression of bodily autonomy has extended to fertility care and contraceptive care in various states throughout the country. Despite Maryland enshrining the Right to Reproductive Freedom into its constitution in November 2024, including the right to "prevent one's own pregnancy," this does not mean that the ability to end one's own pregnancy is ubiquitous. Access to contraceptive care is largely unequal as a result of systemic inequities with the state that extend to Maryland's healthcare system. Access to contraceptives such as OTC birth control is largely dependent on access to adequate and affordable healthcare as well as education of how to navigate the healthcare system. According to the CDC, Black (61.4%) and Hispanic (60.5%) women are less likely to use contraceptives than white women (69.2%).<sup>i</sup> Additionally, Black women (66%) are far more likely to have unintended pregnancies as compared to white women (36%), according to a study published by the National Library of Medicine.<sup>ii</sup>

Access to OTC birth control is not only a subject of women's rights but also must be addressed in order to ameliorate racial inequities within Maryland's healthcare system. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 674.

<sup>i</sup> Daniels K, Abma JC. Current contraceptive status among women aged 15–49: United States, 2017–2019. NCHS Data Brief, no 388. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2020.

<sup>ii</sup> Guzman, L., Wildsmith, E., Manlove, J. and Franzetta, K. (2010), Unintended Births: Patterns by Race and Ethnicity And Relationship Type. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 42: 176-185. <https://doi.org/10.1363/4217610>