



*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA, Acting Secretary*

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: House Bill 1186 – Criminal Law - Causing Ingestion of an Abortion-Inducing Drug - Prohibition – Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chair Clippinger and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of opposition to House Bill (HB) 1186 – Causing Ingestion of an Abortion-Inducing Drug - Prohibition. The bill would prohibit a person from knowingly and willfully causing another to ingest an abortion-inducing drug when the person knows or believes that the other person is pregnant and without consent, through fraud or coercion, or by force or threat of force. It proposes a felony conviction for anyone found guilty and imprisonment for up to 25 years.

The provisions of this bill would be duplicative of existing law, as current criminal statutes, such as those against assault, battery, or other forms of coercion, already apply to situations of one person forcing another to undergo a medical procedure. In addition, proving fraud, coercion, or threat of force could be difficult and may lead to inconsistent enforcement or even wrongful prosecutions, especially against abortion providers who may be charged under this law by disgruntled partners or guardians in the course of providing routine medical care.

Furthermore, by targeting medication abortion provisions under the legally vague definitions of fraud and coercion, the Department is concerned about a chilling effect. Fear of being wrongfully prosecuted under this law could lead to compromised care from providers, who may hesitate to provide necessary care for fear of inadvertently violating the law.

Finally, targeting a proven safe medical procedure like medication abortion under a criminal law is concerning. There is no evidence of widespread coercion among people who receive medication abortions.<sup>1</sup> In addition, medical procedures, including who can provide them and how they should be provided, are highly regulated. The Department questions the benefit of singling

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, Diana Greene, et al. “Attitudes and Decision Making among Women Seeking Abortions at One U.S. Clinic.” Guttmacher Institute, Guttmacher Institute, 25 Aug. 2022, [www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2012/05/attitudes-and-decision-making-among-women-seeking-abortions-one-us-clinic](http://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2012/05/attitudes-and-decision-making-among-women-seeking-abortions-one-us-clinic).

out medication abortion for criminal law, as Maryland does not have criminal statutes targeting other medical procedures.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan Z. Moran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ryan Moran, Dr. P.H., MHSA  
Acting Secretary