



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 891- Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupation – Perinatal Mental Health Conditions

Position: *Support with Amendments*

February 27, 2026

Senate Finance Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support with amendments of Senate Bill 891.

Perinatal mental health conditions affect thousands of Maryland families each year and are often preventable and treatable when identified early. Addressing these conditions is not only a matter of compassionate care, but also a public health imperative. Hospitals support efforts to strengthen the continuum of perinatal mental health care that protects both maternal and infant health.

Hospitals share the goal of ensuring patients are connected to appropriate services early in pregnancy and throughout the postpartum period. SB 891 can help strengthen maternal health outcomes if implemented in a way that reflects how screening and referral processes work in clinical practice and ensures that every Maryland mother has access to timely care.

As the bill moves forward, hospitals ask the committee to consider clarifying language in two areas. First, screening tools identify risk and are not diagnostic tools. A positive screening result should prompt education, further assessment and monitoring, and an offer of referral, instead of mandating a referral. Clarification will help ensure the bill supports appropriate care without unintentionally altering clinical scope of practice. Second, the success of expanded screening depends on patients being able to access timely services. Given existing behavioral health workforce shortages it is important efforts are taken to bolster the availability of providers so identified needs can lead to timely, appropriate behavioral health care.

Hospitals look forward to continuing to work with the sponsors and other stakeholders on these refinements.

For these reasons, MHA requests a favorable report with amendments on Senate Bill 891.

For more information, please contact:

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