

Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.
Senate Finance Committee

**Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations -
Perinatal Mental Health Conditions (SB 891)**

Position: Favorable

Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Community After Birth strongly **supports** SB 891, Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. This bill would expand perinatal mental health screenings and require patient and provider training related to perinatal mental health. In short, this bill will save lives.

Community After Birth's mission is to improve postpartum support of parents and families living in Anne Arundel county, Maryland. Since 2024, our small team has been providing postpartum doula support at no cost to military members/spouses and families facing mental health challenges. Our eligible spaces fill every year, and local mental health providers have been reporting positive feedback about referring their patients to our program. The program and doula team have become beloved by parents who receive this life-saving support.

At intake, parents are sent the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), an evidence-based and validated tool for use in the perinatal population which addresses anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. If a parent screens at-risk, they are immediately followed up with and additional resources and referrals are offered. As a non-profit doula organization, Community After Birth is currently not eligible for reimbursement for this life-saving screening practice.

The health and screening system, as it stands, is not protecting Marylanders from the negative impacts of preventable mental illness and death. Treatment, solutions, and resources exist and are already being utilized in Maryland. SB 891 is a step in the right direction, and will strengthen the existing screening programs across the state.

Parents, parents-to-be, families, and communities in Maryland would greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. As such, I ask for a favorable report.

Warmly,

Lauren Thompson, Director
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