

Testimony Concerning SB 891

“Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations- Perinatal Mental Health Conditions”

Submitted to the Senate Finance Committee

February 27, 2026

Position: Support

I strongly support SB-8901 Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. This bill requires screenings for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) by health providers at prenatal appointments and the postpartum visit, as well as at each of the seven well child visits during a child's first year of life. For a baby to be well supported and healthy, their parents need to be healthy, especially in terms of their mental health. SB-8901 will ensure that parents suffering from PMADs can get the support they need..

I'm a social worker who has practiced in the greater Washington, DC region over the past ten years, and have held my Perinatal Mental Health certification for the past three and half years. It is well-documented that perinatal mental health disorders are the leading cause of maternal death and we know that at least 20% of perinatal individuals experience a mental health condition. In certain populations for people of color or immigrant populations we may see 40% of individuals develop a PMAD. 75% of people with this disorder do not receive any treatment. These conditions impact far beyond the months of pregnancy and postpartum with the relationship between parent and child impacted. Mental health, cognitive and educational problems are also more likely for children even into their adolescent years.

With increased screenings we can support more individuals in accessing the treatment they need. An increasing number of professionals are earning Perinatal Mental Health certification through Postpartum Support International and the stigma related to mental health is shifting over time. The time to require providers to screen EVERY parent for these conditions is now. It's imperative we pass this bill and get Maryland aligned with the best practices for perinatal mental health screening, diagnosis and referral to treatment. Other states are leading the way on passing similar legislation (Minnesota, California, West Virginia, Virginia and New York). Maryland can do better for families and our future and passing this legislation will support goals outlined in the 2025 Maryland Maternal Health Improvement plan.

Please issue a favorable report on SB 891 to ensure that Maryland's parents and children are supported in these vulnerable times of pregnancy and postpartum. If I can be of any further assistance related to efforts to support our perinatal population in Maryland, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea L. Agalloco".

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