

**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:

My name is Dr. Rowena Winkler, and I write this letter in strong support of 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.

Several years ago, after the birth of my son, I experienced postpartum psychosis. I did not know that what was happening to me had a name. I had not been adequately screened. I had not been educated on the warning signs. My family did not know what to look for. What began as sleeplessness and anxiety escalated into a psychiatric emergency that required crisis intervention.

Postpartum psychosis is rare, but it is life-threatening. It can emerge rapidly, especially in the setting of severe sleep deprivation. In my case, by the time help was called, I was already detached from reality. My husband had to contact emergency services because my behavior had become concerning and I had not slept. I was ultimately hospitalized.

I am fortunate. I survived. My children still have their mother. Many families are not as lucky.

What haunts me most is how preventable the escalation may have been. If I had been more thoroughly screened. If my providers had discussed the full spectrum of perinatal mental health conditions — not just “baby blues.” If my family had been educated about early warning signs. If there had been clearer systems in place to identify and respond to severe symptoms before crisis.

As a mother, a Maryland resident, and a professional who now speaks publicly about perinatal mental health, I know how critical early screening, education, and provider training are. Expanding standardized screenings and ensuring both patients and providers understand the range and severity of perinatal mental health conditions will not only reduce suffering — it will save lives.

Perinatal mental health conditions do not discriminate. They affect high-achieving professionals, loving parents, and families who are doing everything “right.” Silence and lack of education are dangerous. Policy change is powerful.

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

Sincerely,
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