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**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 891 Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions

I am Celia Serkin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. (MC Federation of Families), a family peer-led support organization serving diverse families in Montgomery County who have children, youth, and/or young adults with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges. MC Federation of Families has been providing family peer services to families in Montgomery County for 20 years. Our Family Peer Specialists are parents who have raised or are currently raising children with these challenges. I am a Montgomery County resident and have two children, now adults, who have struggled since childhood with behavioral health challenges. My son has suffered from debilitating depression for many years. My daughter is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist who has lived experience with co-occurring challenges.

MC Federation of Families strongly supports SB 891. The bill would:

- Implement the most impactful recommendations of the Task Force to Study Maternal Mental Health, which was established by the General Assembly in 2015
- Bring Maryland into line with other states that have passed legislation similar to SB 891/HB 1118, including Minnesota, California, West Virginia, Virginia and New York
- Achieve some of the goals outlined in a 2025 Maryland Maternal Health Improvement Plan, including improving the screening, diagnosis and treatment of behavioral health conditions in perinatal women, and better training the perinatal workforce to support women's behavioral health

Perinatal mental health disorders can have serious adverse effects on the health and functioning of the mother, her infant and her family.

- 20% of women experience a perinatal mental health condition
- 75% of these women never receive treatment
- Perinatal mental health conditions are the leading cause of maternal death (22%)
- Maternal mental health conditions can disrupt the development of parent-child relationships
- Maternal mental health conditions can cause behavioral, cognitive, and emotional delays in a child

Maryland lags behind other states in perinatal mental health care. Every year the Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health develops state report cards. While overall the 2025 report card gave Maryland a “C,” largely because of its Medicaid expansion, it gave Maryland an “F” for gaps in prenatal and postpartum screening rates and accountability.

SB 891 would improve the overall health and well-being of women and children, and it would mark a critical step in the development of a comprehensive and robust perinatal mental health system of care in Maryland.

MC Federation of Families urges the Senate Finance Committee to support SB 891.