

**Hearing 3/13 at 1:00 p.m.
House Health Committee**

**Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions
(HB1118)**

Position: Favorable

Chair Bagnall and members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Madeleine Mysko and I write this letter in strong **support** of HB1118, 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.

I'm an RN, trained at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in the 1960's. The Sisters taught us that every life is precious, and we were to tend to the particular needs of each one—to advocate for them. Moreover, when it came to Obstetrics, we had two patients in our care—mother and child—and we were to to advocate for them equally. My training was excellent (three full months in Labor and Delivery, which also included postpartum care); still, I don't remember learning about perinatal *mental health*. I also received training in psychiatric nursing (three full months) but again, I don't recall learning about support and vigilance with respect to perinatal *mental health*.

When I as a child, one of my aunts suffered with postpartum depression. My grandparents had to care for their newborn grandchild while my aunt was hospitalized for months, receiving electroshock therapy which apparently caused her to be deaf for the rest of her life. But of course it wasn't until I was much older that I heard about my aunt's suffering. In those days days, people only whispered about such a thing—a new mother dangerously depressed and unable to care for her beautiful, healthy baby.

I bring up the story of my aunt for the lesson in it: even though in my own family there had been a perinatal emergency that very nearly cost my aunt's life, by the time I was in training that emergency had become just a startling story about *her*, not about a tragedy that the scientific community knows very well could befall *any new mother* and the family surrounding them.

I'm grateful for HB1118. I truly believe it will prevent suffering and surely save lives. I think my aunt would be very happy to know I told her story today in order to support *all* new mothers going forward. Moms, families, and communities in Maryland would greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. As such, I ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Mysko
102 Overcrest Road
Towson, MD. 21286
mmysko@comcast.net
443-226-5743