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ASSOCIATION

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March 11, 2026

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
Health Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 1118 Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health Conditions**  
**Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the House Health Committee to **report favorably on HB 1118**.

HB 1118 takes an important and comprehensive step toward improving the identification and treatment of perinatal mental health conditions in Maryland. Mental health conditions that arise during pregnancy and the postpartum period—including postpartum depression—are common and can have significant consequences for parents, infants, and families if they are not identified and treated early. HB 1118 strengthens Maryland’s response by requiring coverage for screening at key points in pregnancy and the first year after birth, establishing a perinatal mental health screening program, and ensuring that individuals have appropriate access to mental health providers during this critical period.

The bill appropriately recognizes that pregnancy and the postpartum year represent a uniquely vulnerable time for many families. By providing a standing referral to a mental health provider during pregnancy and for one year following childbirth, HB 1118 removes unnecessary barriers to care and allows patients to access mental health treatment when they need it most. The bill also supports early identification by requiring screening at prenatal visits, postpartum care, and well-child visits during the infant’s first year—times when parents are already engaged with the health care system and when intervention can be particularly effective.

HB 1118 promotes a coordinated public health approach by supporting training for health professionals, providing evidence-based educational resources for patients and providers, and requiring continuing education on perinatal mental health conditions for relevant licensed professionals. Together, these provisions strengthen Maryland’s ability to recognize and address perinatal mental health conditions early, reduce suffering for parents and families, and support healthy early childhood development.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to give **HB 1118** a favorable report. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA’s Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D. at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

*Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.*  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
President

*Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.*  
Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs