

HB0158\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/04/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

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**TESTIMONY ON HB#0158 POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Maternal Health Monitoring Pilot Program**

**TO:** Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0158, **Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Maternal Health Monitoring Pilot Program**

The March of Dimes Report Card on Maryland on Preterm Births gave Maryland a grade of D+. <sup>1</sup>

6,896 babies were born preterm in Maryland in 2024. Maryland ranks 28th of 52 (includes all states, DC, and Puerto Rico) for preterm birth with a rate of 10.5%. We rank 24<sup>th</sup> in infant mortality rates. The infant mortality rate among babies born to Black moms is 1.7x the state rate.

The charts in their report are sobering and tell us Maryland has a long way to go to improve Maternal Health outcomes in Maryland.

We can make a start on overcoming the problems noted by establishing the Maternal Health Monitoring Pilot Program in the Maryland Department of Health to support pregnant and postpartum Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients who have higher risks of pregnancy complications because of maternal hypertension or maternal diabetes; requiring the Department to select at least one managed care organization to administer the Program; requiring the managed care organizations to contract with a technology vendor to offer remote patient monitoring services to participants; etc.

We can save mothers and their children by creating this pilot program to give us tools to implement statewide for better results.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0158.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/maryland/report-card>