

Hearing 3/13/26 at 1:00 p.m. House Health Committee
HB 1118 Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health
Conditions

Position: Favorable

Chair Bagnall and members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Danelle Buchman, and I am a Mother with lived experience, a perinatal mental health therapist, a maternal mental health advocate, and the co-Chair of the Postpartum Support International Maryland Chapter Board of Directors. I write this letter in strong support of HB 1118, 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.

Perinatal mental health conditions are the leading cause of U.S. maternal mortality, responsible for 23% of such deaths. Rates among Black and Native American patients are even higher. For comparison, excess bleeding is responsible for 14% of maternal deaths. ([Source: Association of American Medical Colleges](#))

I have seen firsthand how invisible and overwhelming perinatal mental health struggles can be. Like many new mothers, I appeared “fine” on the outside while privately feeling anxious, exhausted, and disconnected. At the time, I did not realize that what I was experiencing was a common and treatable medical condition. No one asked the right questions, and I did not know how to ask for help. It took far longer than it should have for me to receive support.

I often think about how different that experience could have been if routine, meaningful screening had been in place—if someone had paused long enough to ask how I was really doing and connected me to care early. Screening does more than identify risk; it opens the door to conversation, reduces stigma, and helps parents access treatment before a crisis occurs.

No parent should have to suffer in silence, and no family should lose a loved one to a preventable mental health condition. HB 1118 will ensure that both patients and providers are better equipped to recognize warning signs, intervene early, and provide compassionate, evidence-based care.

Moms, families, and communities across Maryland would greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Danelle Buchman
6525 Autumn Wind Circle
Clarksville, MD 21029