



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

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Chair Heather Bagnall

Health Committee

241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 1118- Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. The bill improves the mental health care for individuals who are pregnant or recently gave birth by ensuring that insurance companies give patients a long term referral to a mental health care professor, making it easier for patients to see a mental health provider who is outside of their insurance network, requiring certain insurance plans to cover mental health screenings during and after pregnancy, creating and improving training programs for healthcare providers dealing with mental health issues in postpartum or pregnant patients, requiring Maryland Department of Health to set up a screening program for perinatal mental health conditions, and requiring healthcare providers to complete continuing education when renewing their license on perinatal mental health. House Bill 1118 is essential as the goal is to improve screening, education, access to care, and insurance coverage for pregnant women dealing with mental health conditions during and after pregnancy. **This bill is a 2026 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland believes that HB 1118 will help detect early signs of mental health issues during pregnancy or after pregnancy while ensuring that insurance companies help cover screenings and allow patients to find the right provider for their needs, as minority women are often ignored during these situations. HB 1118 would broaden the goal for increasing the number of perinatal mental health screenings during the perinatal period, allowing for one at each prenatal visit, two within six weeks postpartum, and one at each well-child visit within the first year.

Additionally, other states, Minnesota, California, West Virginia, and Virginia, have created bills focusing on requiring health plans for maternal mental health during and after pregnancy. HB 1118 will allow for incentivized training for all providers to renew their licenses and require one to two continuing education units that focus on perinatal mental health. House Bill 1118 overall helps improve the community by providing access, facilitating early detection, promoting healthier families, and training better healthcare providers for our communities.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly

supports House Bill 1118.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland