



Testimony Concerning HB 1118
“Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations –
Perinatal Mental Health Conditions”
Submitted to the House Health Committee
March 13, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 1118 “Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health Conditions.” This bill requires screenings for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) by health providers at prenatal appointments and the post-partum visit as well as at each of the 7 well-child visits during a child’s first year of life. For a baby to be well supported and healthy, their parents need to be healthy, especially in terms of their mental health. HB 1118 will ensure that parents suffering from PMADs can get the support they need.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and families in Maryland. As the largest and oldest statewide child advocacy organization in Maryland, MFN is strongly committed to ensuring the health and well-being of children across our state.

According to the Mental Health Association of Maryland, 20% of women experience a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder during their pregnancy or within the first year of their babies’ lives.¹ Two-thirds of people who suffer from PMADs do not get any treatment. PMADs include anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and psychosis.² Many adults, especially first-time parents, are not aware of the wide range of ways a PMAD may look and feel. Given how hard it is to be pregnant and/or have a newborn, a lot of parents are inclined to ignore their anxiety or sadness. Having trusted medical providers screening for these mood disorders throughout both pregnancy and a baby’s first year will help ensure that parents that are suffering are able to get the support they need.

From birth until a child turns three, there are 1 million neural connections made per second.³ For that brain development to stay on track, young children need a strong healthy emotional connection to at least one adult. PMADs can interfere with a parent’s ability to develop that strong attachment to their baby. **We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1118 to ensure that Maryland’s parents have all the support they need to care for their babies.**

¹ <https://www.mhamd.org/what-we-do/outreach-and-education/healthy-new-moms/learn-more/>

² Id.

³ <https://www.zerotothree.org/why-0-3/>