



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 19, 2026

House Bill 1401
Public Health - Abortion - Informed Consent
House Health Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 1401 requires qualified providers to inform patients of certain information and obtain signed, written informed consent before performing a procedure to terminate a pregnancy.

Informed consent is a foundational principle in both medical ethics and the law.¹ Patients have the right to receive clear, comprehensive information about recommended treatments, ask questions, and make well-considered decisions about their care. Open and thorough communication strengthens the patient–physician relationship, builds trust, and supports meaningful shared decision-making. As with any medical procedure, transparency about potential risks, side effects, and aftercare is essential.

Data has raised concerns about complications associated with chemical abortions. An analysis of Medicaid claims found that abortion-related emergency room visits following chemical abortions increased significantly between 2002 and 2015, during a period in which the proportion of chemical abortions also rose substantially within the study population. The rate of abortion-related emergency room visits following a chemical abortion increased over 500% from 2002 through 2015, according to an analysis of Medicaid claims data.² Reported complications can include severe pain, heavy or prolonged bleeding, hemorrhage, infection, vomiting, sepsis, and unusual discharge. Patients should also be informed about proper

¹ <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/informed-consent>

² <https://lozierinstitute.org/public-health-threat-chemical-abortion-leads-to-significantly-higher-rate-of-er-visits/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20study%20from%20the%20Charlotte,Chemical%20abortion%20makes%20subsequent%20abortions%20more%20dangerous>

aftercare, warning signs that require emergency treatment, and the potential emotional or mental health impacts that may follow the procedure.

Maryland has enshrined abortion in the State constitution. In that context, ensuring strong informed consent protections becomes even more important. Patients deserve full and accurate information before undergoing medical treatment. The Maryland Catholic Conference remains committed to protecting women's health and the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. Requiring comprehensive informed consent helps safeguard women by ensuring they fully understand the nature and risks of the procedure and can make decisions with clarity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 1401**.

Thank you for your consideration.