



March 25, 2026

**COMMITTEE:** House Health Committee

**BILL:** SB 169 – Hospitals – Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions – Procedures

**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives. The Foundation is pleased to **support SB 169 – Hospitals – Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions – Procedures**. This bill would require hospitals to examine and treat patients who present to emergency departments with an emergency pregnancy-related medical condition, and to allow for the termination of a pregnancy if it is medically necessary to stabilize the patient.

In the few years since the U.S. Supreme Court repealed Roe vs. Wade, we have seen heartbreaking stories across the country of pregnant women being denied the care that they need due to their states' restrictions on abortion – at times with catastrophic consequences – and potential legal penalties for doctors who provide them<sup>i</sup>. While those penalties do not exist in Maryland and voters approved a ballot measure in 2024 to enshrine the right to reproductive freedom into the state constitution, it is important to codify into law that hospitals must provide any medical care that is necessary to treat pregnant patients. With attacks on reproductive freedom continuing across the country, and with the ongoing national maternal health crisis, Maryland must remain a leader and ensure that all women and pregnant people can get the care they need.

For the last several years, the Horizon Foundation has advocated for policies and programs that would implement a full continuum of reproductive health services in our community and in our state. We have also been working with several nonprofit organizations, funders and clinical providers to examine solutions to improve maternal and child health. Much work remains to solve the maternal health crisis we are experiencing in the United States, particularly for mothers of color. Nationally, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women.<sup>ii</sup> In addition, more than 80% of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable.<sup>iii</sup> Here in Maryland, Black mothers are more likely than White mothers to have a preterm birth, and more than twice as likely to have their babies experience low birth weight or

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infant mortality.<sup>iv</sup> Ensuring that all women and birthing people have adequate access to the health services they need before, during and after pregnancy is critical.

We strongly believe everyone should have access to high quality, respectful reproductive and pregnancy care. For this reason, the Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 169** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/criminal-penalties-for-physicians-in-state-abortion-bans/>

<sup>ii</sup> The Network for Public Health Law, 2023.

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/womens-health/features/maternal-mortality.html>

<sup>iv</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/interactive/womens-health-profiles/maryland/maternal-infant-health/>