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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2/18/2026

To: Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair

Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Health Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express its support for **HB 1106 – Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement – Establishment**.

HB 1106 addresses the longstanding lack of attention given to women's unique health needs, which historically have been under-researched and insufficiently prioritized. The bill establishes the Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement to evaluate the feasibility of creating a women's hospital in Southern Maryland and to explore the development of a statewide surgical network dedicated to advancing women's health.

Southern Maryland faces significant gaps in healthcare services for women, including limited access to medical specialists and persistent healthcare workforce shortages that impact hospital staffing. Residents in rural areas also encounter barriers such as long travel distances to hospitals and inadequate access to prenatal and maternal care, contributing to higher maternal mortality rates in these communities. HB 1106 seeks to assess whether a women-centered hospital is feasible in this region and to identify opportunities to strengthen women's healthcare infrastructure statewide.

The United States continues to have the highest maternal mortality rate among developed nations, with disproportionately high rates among African American mothers and American Indian and Alaska Native women. Socioeconomic inequities further exacerbate these disparities by restricting access to essential healthcare services for underserved populations.

In addition to improving health outcomes, HB 1106 is expected to generate meaningful economic benefits. Improved access to healthcare supports workforce participation, enhances family stability, and strengthens communities. Women play essential roles as caregivers, professionals, and leaders, and addressing their distinct healthcare needs has far-reaching benefits for women, children, and families across Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus respectfully urges a **favorable report** on HB 1106.