



TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: March 6, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 1067 – *Doulas – Doula Technical Assistance Advisory Group and Certification*

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The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Maryland Section (MDACOG), which represents the Maryland physicians who serve the obstetrical and gynecological needs of Maryland women and their families, **supports with amendment** House Bill 1067.

House Bill 1067 establishes the Doula Technical Advisory Group to make recommendations to the Secretary of Health on establishing a voluntary doula certification program. The advisory group must submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Maryland Department of Health, the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee by January 1, 2021, and a final report by January 1, 2022. If the advisory group recommends establishment of a voluntary doula certification program in its final report, the Secretary of Health must adopt regulations establishing such a program consistent with the advisory group's recommendations.

A doula is not a health care provider but rather a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible. Research has demonstrated that the integration of doula services into the provision of perinatal services is associated with lower caesarian births, fewer obstetrical interventions, fewer complications, decreased use of pain medication, shorter labors, and higher scores for newborns on the "APGAR" test. The framework for developing a voluntary doula certification program provided in House Bill 1067 is patterned after the successful effort to develop a framework for community health workers.

MDACOG strongly supports the passage of House Bill 1067 but would request an amendment which substitutes "a representative from the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists" for "one obstetrician-gynecologist licensed in the State" found on page 3, line 6 of the bill. This amendment will assure that the obstetrician and gynecologist appointed to the committee has the input from all of MDACOG's membership as well as access to the organization's national resources. With the noted amendment, MDACOG urges a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Richard A. Tabuteau  
410-244-7000