



**Committee:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
**Bill Number:** SB 777  
**Title:** Public Health – Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Grant Program Fund  
**Hearing Date:** February 24, 2021  
**Position:** Support with Amendments

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The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports *Senate Bill 777 – Public Health – Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Grant Program Fund*. This bill would enhance the Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program by making funds available to federally qualified health centers and other practitioners to provide services related to prenatal care.

Prenatal care is essential to ensuring positive health outcomes for pregnant women and newborns. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “as many as 60% of all maternal deaths in the U.S. are preventable and that increasing access to preconception, prenatal, and interconception care can reduce pregnancy-related complications.”<sup>i</sup>

The Maryland Medical Assistance Program provides coverage for prenatal services for pregnant individuals, but some low-income individuals are still unable to qualify. When left without coverage, these individuals may forgo needed prenatal services – leading to poor outcomes for themselves and their newborns. This legislation proposes a grant program that will provide basic prenatal services for individuals who do not qualify for Medicaid, but cannot afford health care services on their own.

ACNM requests a technical amendment to recognize certified nurse-midwives and other non-physician providers of prenatal care. We are working with the bill sponsor on this amendment. We ask for a favorable report with technical amendments on this critical piece of legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>i</sup> Artiga, Samantha et al. “Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health: An Overview. Kaiser Family Foundation. November 10, 2020. <https://www.kff.org/report-section/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-an-overview-issue-brief/>