



## HB0463 – Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee  
February 2, 2021 3:45 p.m.

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### POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue **a favorable report on HB00463 – Maryland Health Equity Resource Act**, sponsored by Delegate Erek Baron.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Reproductive justice calls for an anti-racist and intersectional approach to our advocacy to ensure that rights to bodily autonomy, access to comprehensive family planning, and high-quality, affordable healthcare are upheld for all.<sup>i</sup> Although Maryland has some of the most progressive legislation when it comes to reproductive healthcare in the United States, racial disparities relating to access to care in the state still persist. These inequalities are apparent when considering maternal mortality rates and access to family planning resources.

The 2019 Maryland Maternal Mortality Review conducted by the Maryland Department of Health, confirmed that maternal mortality has increased since 2008 and is higher than the national average.<sup>ii iii</sup> Further, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) for Black women is 4 times higher than the MMR for white women, and is 1.2 times higher than the national average for Black women. It has also been shown that on average 65% of women have an unmet need for contraceptive services and 27% of women require public support to access contraception in Maryland, with Black and Latinx women representing 44% and 27% of those needs, respectively.<sup>iv</sup> These statistics demonstrate clear disparities in access to quality healthcare for these populations in Maryland.

HB0463 can help address these issues and help reduce health inequities overall by increasing access to reproductive health resources where they are needed most. This bill calls for establishing the Health Equity Resource Community Advisory Committee and Fund in order to support health care initiatives including (1) increasing health provider capacity and improving health care delivery which could mitigate unmet need for contraceptive and family planning resources;<sup>v</sup> (2) improving care coordination which could improve maternal health outcomes;<sup>vi</sup> (3) and addressing upstream determinants of health and non-medical needs of the communities at hand to improve reproductive health overall.<sup>vii</sup>

For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0463**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> SisterSong. "Reproductive Justice." <http://www.sistersong.net/reproductive-justice>.

<sup>ii</sup> CDC National Center for Health Statistics. *Maternal Mortality by State, 2018*. Report. National Center for Health Statistics, CDC. 2019.

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/maternal-mortality/MMR-2018-State-Data-508.pdf>

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- <sup>iii</sup> Maryland Department of Health. *Maryland Maternal Mortality Review: 2019 Annual Report*. Report. April 6, 2020. [https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/Health-General Article, §13-1207, Annotated Code of Maryland - 2019 Annual Report – Maryland Maternal Mortality Review.pdf](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/Health-General%20Article,%20%2413-1207,%20Annotated%20Code%20of%20Maryland%20-%202019%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Maryland%20Maternal%20Mortality%20Review.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> Frost, Jennifer J., Mia R. Zolna, Lori F. Frohwirth, Ayana Douglass-Hall, Nakeisha Blades, Jennifer Mueller, Zoe H. Pleasure, and Shivani Kochhar. "Publicly Supported Family Planning Services in the United States: Likely Need, Availability and Impact, 2016." Guttmacher Institute. August 11, 2020. <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/publicly-supported-FP-services-US-2016>
- <sup>v</sup> ACOG. "Access to Contraception." January 2015. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2015/01/access-to-contraception>
- <sup>vi</sup> Hillemeier, Marianne M., Marisa E. Domino, Rebecca Wells, Ravi K. Goyal, Hye-Chung Kum, Dorothy Cilenti, and Anirban Basu. "Does maternity care coordination influence perinatal health care utilization? Evidence from North Carolina." *Health services research* 53, no. 4 (2018): 2368-2383.
- <sup>vii</sup> ACOG. "Importance of Social Determinants of Health and Cultural Awareness in the Delivery of Reproductive Health Care." ACOG. January 2018. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2018/01/importance-of-social-determinants-of-health-and-cultural-awareness-in-the-delivery-of-reproductive-health-care>