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**BILL NO.:**            **SB 778**

**TITLE:**                Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act)

**SPONSOR:**            Senator Lam

**COMMITTEE:**        Finance

**POSITION:**          **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**                March 8, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 778 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act). This legislation would provide health care services to noncitizen pregnant women and their children up to 1 year old.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had disproportionate impacts on immigrant communities across the State. Inaccessibility to health services and language barriers have made life extremely difficult for many immigrants during an already challenging time, especially those who are pregnant or with young children. Working to address this challenge, Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski created the county's first immigration affairs coordinator in the Office of Community Engagement. This position is held by Giuliana Valencia-Banks, who has served as an indispensable resource for providing services to immigrant communities throughout Baltimore County.

Ensuring access to health care services for noncitizen pregnant women would protect mothers and their children throughout Maryland. This bill would lessen some of the already tremendous hurdles faced by noncitizen pregnant women by providing them access to the critical health care services they need.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 778. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at [jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov).