



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 778 – Support

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support SB 778, Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act).

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 800,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 460,000 members.

We support extending coverage for noncitizen pregnant women who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status and to their children for one year immediately following the pregnancy as envisioned under SB 778. We especially endorse this effort to expand coverage in response to significant increases in maternal mortality and morbidity in recent years. Kaiser Permanente supports policies, like expanded coverage, that improve maternal health care and outcomes and reduce disparities. Additionally, COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on undocumented immigrants, who are disproportionately frontline/service workers, making them particularly vulnerable to the virus.

Undocumented immigrants are at high risk of being uninsured because they have limited access to coverage options. While only lawfully present immigrants can be eligible for Medicaid, states are increasingly leveraging state Medicaid programs to provide access to coverage for undocumented children and adults. As of September 2021, six states (California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Washington) and the District of Columbia are implementing affordable Medicaid equivalent or comparable coverage programs subsidized through state funds for low-income children and adults who do not qualify for subsidized health insurance, including because of their immigration status.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation's largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente's members.

Kaiser Permanente
Comments on SB 778
March 8, 2022

As a HealthChoice MCO, Kaiser Permanente stands ready to work with the state to implement this initiative, if approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.