



March 30, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 166 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) submits this letter of information for Senate Bill 166 (SB 166) titled, "Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage." The HSCRC believes doulas provide important support for pregnant and postpartum individuals, which aligns with the State's goal to improve maternal health outcomes. HSCRC thanks the sponsors for including HSCRC's requested amendment to protect Maryland's unique hospital rate-setting system.

One of the initiatives aimed at improving health under the Maryland Health Model is the Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy (SIHIS). SIHIS is an agreement between the State of Maryland and the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services designed to engage State agencies and private-sector partners to invest in improving health, address disparities, and reduce costs for Marylanders. One of the population health goals under SIHIS is to reduce the State's severe maternal morbidity rate. The purpose of having a SIHIS goal on maternal morbidity is to focus public and private efforts in the State on this critical issue.

To help achieve the goal of reduced maternal morbidity, the HSCRC established a Maternal and Child Health Funding Initiative to fund programs and initiatives led by MDH to address the several maternal morbidity. A portion of the Initiative's \$40 million in cumulative funding for four years (FY22 – FY25) will be directed to support doula services for Medicaid beneficiaries. Doula services have demonstrated a favorable impact on maternal outcomes.¹ While HSCRC does not need statutory changes to continue this funding, this bill is well aligned with that funding initiative.

The HSCRC remains committed to supporting Medicaid coverage of doula services for pregnant and postpartum women. These services are a key tool to reach the SIHIS goal of reducing severe maternal morbidity. If you have any questions or if we may provide you with any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-382-3855 or megan.renfrew1@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan Renfrew". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Megan Renfrew
Associate Director of External Affairs

¹ Vonderheid S. C., Kishi R., Norr K. F., & Klima C. (2011). Group prenatal care and doula care for pregnant women In Handler A., Kennelly J., & Peacock N. (Eds.), Reducing racial/ethnic disparities in reproductive and perinatal outcomes: The evidence from population-based interventions (pp. 369–399). 10.1007/978-1-4419-1499-6_15

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