



Unfavorable

HB 694/SB944 – Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

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State Employees Acting As Abortion Bill Collectors

Maryland Right to Life (MDRTL) opposes HB694/SB944 as written because it will commit additional public funding for *abortion* and divert public funds from lifesaving alternatives to abortion.

This bill will require *public* employees to act as a collection agency for abortion providers at taxpayer expense. Public employees will be complicit in the abortion industry's targeting of low income and immigrant women and their babies for abortion.

Finally, this bill will further penalize hospitals that do not absorb the cost for abortions as part of their Financial Assistance Policy and force them to reimburse the state for costs of enforcing this policy. With the deregulation and widespread distribution of lethal chemical abortion pills, the demand on hospital emergency room personnel to deal with abortion complications has increased 500%. Hospitals should not be required to cover these costs or clean up after abortionists.

Hospitals Forced to Fund Abortions - The Maryland General Assembly established the *Health Services Cost Review Commission* that forces hospitals to absorb costs for uninsured and other patients by adopting **Financial Assistance Policies** (Health-General Article of the Maryland Annotated Code Section 19-214.1 (b) (7).) The state already has expanded eligibility for hospital-subsidized abortion to *low income women* who do not otherwise qualify for Medical Assistance or MCHP under Section 19-214.1 (b)(7). The state also has required that hospitals cover abortion costs for **non-citizens** under Section 19-214.1 (i)(1). These costs get passed along in the form of increased fees for all patients.

Public Employees as Abortion Collectors – This bill requires taxpayer-funded state employees to act as bill collectors for the abortion industry by enforcing requirements on hospitals to pay for abortion related hospital costs for low income and immigrant women under their Financial Assistance Policies. Public employees should not bill state taxpayers for time and effort spent to enrich the abortion industry.

Funding Restrictions are Constitutional - The Supreme Court of the United States has held that while they found a constitutional right to privacy, there is no constitutional right to *abortion funding*. (*Harris v. McRae*, 1980). 54% of people in a January 2022 Marist poll are opposed to taxpayer funding for abortion. Maryland does not have a Hyde-style amendment to exclude taxpayer funding of abortions so any legislation that addresses health care or pregnancy will likely cover abortion services unless lawmakers specifically exclude abortion through amendments.

Public Funding through Maryland Medicaid – Maryland is one of only 4 states that forces taxpayers to fund abortions. There is *bi-partisan unity* on prohibiting the use of taxpayer funding for abortion. 54% percent of those surveyed in a January 2022 Marist poll say they oppose taxpayer funding of abortion.

The *Maryland Medical Assistance Program* and the *Maryland Children's Health Program* (MCHP) are the two primary programs used for publicly funded reimbursements to abortion providers in Maryland. According to the Maryland Department of Legislative Services in their *Analysis of the FY2021 Maryland Executive Budget*, Maryland taxpayers, through the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, are being forced to pay for *elective* abortions. We spent at least \$6.5 million for 9,--- abortions, which were not due to rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

ABORTION IS NOT HEALTH CARE – Pregnancy is not a disease and abortion kills, not cures. The fact that 85% of OB-GYNs in a representative national survey will not participate in abortions is glaring evidence that abortion is not an essential part of women's healthcare. Abortion is never medically necessary and poses risks to women's physical and emotional health as well as to the health of future pregnancies. Women have better options for family planning and well woman care. For each Planned Parenthood in Maryland, there are 14 federally qualifying health centers and 4 pro-life pregnancy centers providing FREE services for women. The Maryland Department of Health must give women real CHOICE and protect women from abortion coercion, by providing information about and referrals to lifesaving alternatives to abortion.

"D-I-Y Abortion" Drugs - Telabortion and other reckless public health policies that authorize the unregulated proliferation of chemical abortion pills are brazenly removing abortion further outside the spectrum of "health care" as most women are now prescribed these lethal pills without the benefit of a physician's examination or any medical care. Physicians now serve only a tangential role on paper, either as medical directors for clinics or as remote prescribers of abortion pills. Non-medical abortion providers will become eligible for Maryland Medicaid reimbursement as well as undisclosed gratuities from drug manufacturers.

The abortion industry itself has referred to the use of abortion pills as **"Do-It-Yourself" abortions**, claiming that the method is safe and easy. But chemical abortions are **4 (four) times more dangerous than surgical abortions**, presenting a high risk of hemorrhaging, infection, and even death. With the widespread distribution of chemical abortion pills, the demand on Emergency Room personnel to deal with abortion complications has increased 500%.

UNENFORCED - The Maryland Department of Health has failed to ensure that existing abortion providers and facilities are complying with Maryland law. Women continue to be injured and killed in Maryland because of abortion bias and ineffective enforcement of existing abortion regulations. The broad expansion of non-physician and even **non-medical abortion providers** will create an **enforcement nightmare** for the Maryland Department of Health. We must protect pregnant women in Maryland, whether citizen or non-citizen from predatory abortion practices including human and sex trafficking and abortion coercion.

CONCLUSION - For these reasons, we respectfully ask you to vote against this bill. As a matter of ethics, we urge any legislator who has received financial or other compensation from abortion organizations including Planned Parenthood Action, NARAL or Advocates for Youth, to **RECUSE** yourself from debate and **ABSTAIN** from voting on this and any other bills that will enrich the abortion industry.

If it is the intention of the Maryland General Assembly to promote healthy pregnancies and healthy birth and delivery outcomes, you must eliminate abortion and abortion funding from all legislation and programs. **Abortion interests always will compete against healthy birth and delivery outcomes.**