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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee (Maryland Department of Health)

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
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DATE: February 7, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 119 – *Public Health – Giving Infants a Future Without Transmission (GIFT) Act*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 119.

House Bill 119 is a Departmental bill that proposes to modify current requirements related to HIV and syphilis testing and reporting for pregnant women and newborns. These modifications strengthen the State's current framework to address an increased incidence of HIV and syphilis in newborns. The bill expands the testing and reporting requirements from just physicians to any health care provider who has diagnosed an individual with HIV, while under their care, and expands the reporting requirements to include the pregnancy status of an individual, if applicable. House Bill 119 also requires testing of a pregnant woman in the third trimester as well as at the time of delivery, including stillborn births under certain circumstances. Expanding the application of these requirements to all health care providers will ensure that certified nurse midwives, certified midwives, and direct-entry midwives as well as other health care providers will play a role in the State's effort to address the noted increased incidence of HIV. Finally, the bill requires a hospital to determine the syphilis serologic status of a mother before discharging the newborn for purposes of neonatal evaluation and treatment.

Improving maternal child health has been a priority for the General Assembly as well as the above-named organizations. The enhanced testing and reporting requirements reflected in House Bill 119 provides the State an additional avenue to enhance the health and safety of Maryland's women and children. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information:**

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