



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 930 – Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 930 – Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment. This bill establishes the Public Health Abortion Grant Program to provide grants to improve access to abortion care clinical services for individuals in the State; establishes the Public Health Abortion Grant Program Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to provide grants under the Program; and requires that certain premium funds collected by health insurance carriers be used to provide certain coverage and to support improving access to abortion care clinical services under certain circumstances.

While Maryland's abortion policies are among the most protective in the country, abortion access is threatened by uncompensated out-of-pocket costs borne by both providers and patients. Though Maryland requires insurers, including Medicaid, to cover abortion care, the reimbursement rates do not always cover the full cost. This discrepancy is especially true for later abortion care, which is more costly than early abortion care, leaving patients and providers with larger cost gaps to fill. Additionally, about 20% of Maryland's abortion patients travel from out of state, illustrating Maryland's role as a safe haven for abortion access; and yet these patients are typically unable to use insurance to cover the cost of their care.

Due to a lack of federal and state funding, abortion clinics and patients have relied on nonprofits, such as abortion funds, to help cover costs. However, after an initial outpouring of financial support after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, donations from the public have dwindled. As a result of waning donations, the National Abortion Federation recently suspended two funding support streams and cut overall funding for clinics by nearly 50%, which has significantly impacted Maryland providers. Unwilling to sacrifice patient access, some clinics continue to provide abortion services at their own financial expense, but this approach is unsustainable.

As a state known for its leadership in reproductive rights, Maryland should continue to set an example by taking concrete action to support abortion access. At least four other states have

committed state funds for local abortion fund organizations.¹ Emulating these efforts would continue to solidify Maryland's critical role in the movement to protect and expand abortion rights, access and care, and would strengthen existing investments related to clinical training, insurance coverage, and data protection.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LH Scott', written in a cursive style.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

¹ Eight Ways State Policymakers Can Protect and Expand Abortion Rights and Access in 2023. (2023, January). Guttmacher. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from <https://www.guttmacher.org/2023/01/eight-ways-state-policymakers-can-protect-and-expand-abortion-rights-and-access-2023>