



House Bill 520

Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination - Grant Funding and Task Force

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations
Committee

Date: February 27, 2019

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 520 as it provides needed funding to a grant program to help counties assisting vulnerable families.

HB 520 bolsters funding for the Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program that helps counties and municipalities provide care coordination, intervention, and services to low-income pregnant and postpartum women and children from birth to three years old. Priority for grant funding is given to jurisdictions with high rates of infant mortality or pre-term births, and high rates of women enrolled in Medicaid.

The grant program helps local governments and their community-based partners to spearhead comprehensive, collaborative programs designed to address women's pre- and postnatal health and their child's development. Increasing funding from \$50,000 to \$5 million beginning in fiscal 2021 will go a long way to support programs that help reduce health disparities and improve the well-being of women and children. A holistic approach to supporting children and their mothers can yield overwhelming results for the long-term well-being of counties and their communities.

Additionally, HB 520 includes a task force to study how the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) policies can be used to incentivize early intervention and prevention of key adverse health outcomes, and how payment mechanisms can support improvements on certain community-based, public health, and Medicaid efforts.

Counties have a vested public health interest in the well-being of women and children in their communities and HB 520 would provide needed funding to assist these vulnerable residents. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 520.