



## **Senate Bill 406**

### *Task Force on Maryland Maternal and Child Health*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

Date: March 20, 2019

To: Health and Government Operations and  
Appropriations Committees

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 406 WITH AMENDMENTS** to ensure the bill provides needed funding for a grant program to help counties assisting vulnerable families, as it was intended to do.

As introduced, SB 406 would bolster 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 was given to jurisdictions with high rates of infant mortality or pre-term births, and high rates of women enrolled in Medicaid.

As amended by the Senate, the bill has been stripped of all additional funding and turned solely into 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 reject limiting the bill to a task force and urge the committee to conform the bill to its crossfile, HB 520, as it passed out of the House.

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 \$100,000 beginning in fiscal 2021 as was done in the House bill, will 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.

Counties have a vested public health interest in the well-being of women and children in their communities. SB 406 amended to mirror HB 520 would provide needed funding to assist these vulnerable residents. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS SB 406 WITH AMENDMENTS**.