



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 602

Maternal Mortality Review Program - Establishment of Local Teams

TO: Chair Kelley, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore
DATE: February 14, 2019

Family League of Baltimore (Family League) supports Senate Bill 602, Maternal Mortality Review Program - Establishment of Local Teams. This bill would support the work of the statewide Maternal Mortality Review Program by creating mechanisms for local health offices to assemble a more focused, regionally-responsive review team. Additionally, local teams would be allowed to include a more diverse set of stakeholders, including an obstetrician-gynecologist, a direct-entry midwife, a birthing doula, and “any other individual necessary to the work of the local team.”

There is a significant need for our counties, when requested, to have access to all of the data and tools necessary to conduct a local maternal mortality review. Maternal mortality in the state is alarmingly on the rise; Maryland’s maternal mortality rate for 2011-2015 is 20% higher than its rate for the five years prior. Nationally, Black women have a maternal mortality rate that is more than 2.5 times that of White women, but that disparity is higher in Maryland at 2.74 times.¹ Risk of maternal mortality seems to be exacerbated by race, age, and residence in rural and high-poverty communities.²

Through our work as a convener in the B’More for Healthy Babies strategy, we have focused on reversing the deep racial disparity in infant mortality rates across Baltimore City by utilizing the research of the City’s localized Fetal-Infant Mortality Review Team (FIMR). FIMR’s Community Action Team, as well as its two Neighborhood Action Teams, translate the recommendations of the FIMR Case Review Team into improved policies, systems, and public education campaigns that support maternal health and a decline in infant fatalities in targeted neighborhoods throughout the City.³ Maryland’s counties and jurisdictions should have the ability to do a similar level of research, strategy implementation and resource allocation to address the alarmingly climbing rate of maternal deaths.

As the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League’s mission is to serve as an architect of change by promoting data-driven, collaborative initiatives and aligning resources to create lasting outcomes for children, families and communities. This work is guided by the State’s Child Well-being Results Areas. We support SB 602 in particular due to its alignment with these result areas by working to ensure that “Babies are Born Healthy” and “Children are Healthy.”⁴

For more information contact Matt Quinlan, Public Policy Manager: mquinlan@familyleague.org

¹ Maryland Maternal Mortality Review (2017). *Annual Report*. Maryland Department of Health http://healthymaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MMR-Report-2017_FINAL.pdf

² World Health Organization (2018). *Maternal Mortality Fact Sheet*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

³ B’More for Healthy Babies (2016). *Fetal-Infant Mortality Review In Baltimore City*. <http://www.healthymbabiesbaltimore.com/uploads/files/Baltimore%20City%20FIMR%20Interim%20FY%202016-2017%20Report.pdf>

⁴ Maryland Governor’s Office for Children. “Maryland’s Child Well-Being Scorecard.” <https://goc.maryland.gov/reportcard/>