



## Maternity Care Coalition Announces 2016 Legislative Advocacy

*Coalition to support commonsense reforms to safeguard women's access to obstetrical care*

For Immediate Release

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**BALTIMORE, MD (November 13, 2015)** – Today, a Maryland coalition of mothers, doctors, nonprofit medical institutions and engaged citizens aimed at protecting access to maternity care for women across the state announced its planned advocacy priorities for the 2016 Maryland General Assembly Session.

The coalition hopes to build upon the momentum of the 2015 session when the legislature adopted SB187 authorizing a workgroup of healthcare and legal experts to study access to obstetric services and make recommendations for legislation. The legislative workgroup is expected to publish its report and recommendations by December 1, 2015, ahead of the 2016 session. This effort follows a 2014 state health department taskforce report which urged the General Assembly to pursue the creation of a No Fault Birth Injury Fund – paid for by hospitals – to reduce medical liability risk in the field of obstetrics, in order to safeguard women's access to maternity care ([State panel recommends creation of a birth injury fund](#), Baltimore Sun, 12/24/14).

“Maryland is facing a crisis in access to obstetrical care as three Maryland hospitals have closed their maternity wards in the last three years. Our state seems to be repeating the mistakes of Philadelphia, where more than 13 hospitals closed their maternity wards over a decade and women now struggle to access care,” said Beth Laverick, President of the Maryland Maternity Access Coalition. “Working with many partners and our thousands of grassroots supporters on social media, our 2016 legislative priority is to seek commonsense reforms like the creation of a Birth Injury Fund so that more children who suffer birth injuries will get the lifetime care they need because it's based on the injury, not the outcome of a lawsuit.”

The proposed fund, similar to ones that have been successfully in operation since the late 1980s in [Florida](#) and [Virginia](#), enjoys bi-partisan support from voters across the state. A [statewide poll](#)

[of voters released earlier this year](#) – conducted by OpinionWorks of Annapolis – found that Maryland voters support creating a birth injury fund by a 3-to-1 margin, with 62 percent in favor and only 21 percent opposed. In the poll, voters strongly support the concept of families giving up their right to sue in exchange for being guaranteed an award from the fund if a child suffers a permanent birth injury.

“Sadly, despite overwhelming support from Maryland voters, trial lawyers—a narrow special interest group—spend millions of dollars on campaign contributions and backroom lobbying to block common sense reforms like a birth injury fund,” Laverick continued. “We are proud to work with the Maryland Hospital Association and many of its individual members, MedChi—the Maryland State Medical Society, Medical Mutual of Maryland, Maryland American College of Nurse Midwives, Maryland Rural Health Association, Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, Total HealthCare, Family Health Centers of Baltimore, Park West Health, Catholic Charities of Baltimore, the Maryland Catholic Conference, The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and thousands of Marylanders on social media who all support creating a No-Fault Birth Injury Fund.”

For more information on the Maryland Maternity Access Coalition’s activities, visit the coalition’s Facebook page and website at [www.facebook.com/mdmaternityaccess](http://www.facebook.com/mdmaternityaccess) and [www.mdmaternityaccess.org](http://www.mdmaternityaccess.org).

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