



February 14, 2019

Senate Finance Committee

Testimony on SB 602: Maternal Mortality Review Program - Establishment of Local Teams

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**Position: Support**

Prince George's Child Resource Center's (PGCRC) has been working since 1990 to support families from the time they are pregnant until their children are 5 years old.

While Maryland's maternal mortality rate is relatively small (41 pregnancy-associated deaths in 2015 state-wide), **this rate is 20% higher than rates in 2006-2010.**

Furthermore, the rate of **mortality among black women is almost 3 times that of their white counterparts.** This should be considered a health crisis in Maryland.

The existing Statewide Maternal Mortality Review Team is critically important, but the establishment of **local review teams** will allow regions to glean insights that may be unique to their communities. The more information that can be gained, the greater chance we have of preventing an infant's tragic loss of a mother.

PGCRC's home visiting program, accredited by Healthy Families America and funded in part by state dollars, provides support to 170 struggling families a year. Our evidence-based strategies target pregnant moms facing difficult challenges such as isolation, depression, past physical and/or sexual abuse, poverty, substance abuse and domestic violence – all factors that contribute to poor outcomes for pregnant women.

PGCRC's home visiting program serves one such family. Teresa (not her real name), a mother of twins, died in childbirth, never able to reach her full potential nor to provide the care that all children deserve and need from a mother. Teresa's husband was overwhelmed with the loss of his wife, and the tragedy is far reaching – impacting his ability to work and provide for his family both financially and emotionally, and impacting his extended family who has relocated to provide support for the twins. The total cost of this preventable tragedy cannot be calculated. Her children bear the greatest loss.



Local Review Teams identify local trends that demonstrate gaps in prevention and supportive services and can build a network for coordinating system-wide services to prevent this type of loss—for not only a family, but the community as a whole.

Maternal mortality is rare – but even one is too many. If a local review team can uncover information that could lead to future prevention of loss of life, it is our obligation to make sure that it happens.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of SB 602 and PGCRC urges you to offer your support.

*Prince George's Child Resource Center helps create healthy and nurturing environments for children by supporting their families and educating their caregivers.*