



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

November 9, 2023

Honorable Representatives
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative:

On behalf of 235 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania expresses its support for SB 500 PN 1175 known as "Owens Law," sponsored by Senator Michele Brooks. Representing hospitals and health systems across the commonwealth, our charge is to support equitable access to care for all Pennsylvanians across their lifespan. SB 500 effectuates policy that would achieve this mission by increasing access to life-changing and lifesaving care for some of our most vulnerable patients, medically compromised infants. Please vote yes on SB 500.

In very low birth-weight babies and other medically compromised infants, pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) protects against serious health complications that can lead to longer hospital stays; multiple medical and surgical procedures; readmissions; life-long disabilities or even death; while also increasing rates of maternal breastfeeding. When a mother's own milk is unavailable, donor milk is often medically prescribed for children with heart problems and other serious health issues including neonatal abstinence syndrome, which occurs when infants are exposed to opioids or other substances of abuse in utero.

Under SB 500, medically compromised infants who do not have access to their own mothers' milk will have increased access to medically prescribed PDHM. The bill requires coverage and reimbursement by public payors for both inpatient and outpatient infants.

This bill also outlines criteria for the use of PDHM in inpatient and outpatient settings for a small subset of infants who are medically fragile and under the age of 12 months. To qualify for coverage, the child's mother must be medically or physically unable to produce maternal breast milk in an amount needed to meet an infant's needs. The donor milk must be from a milk bank licensed in Pennsylvania pursuant to the Keystone Mother's Milk Bank Act (Act 7 of 2020).

The hospital community supports work on this important issue and asks you to prioritize consideration and vote yes on SB 500.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and work to improve health care for all Pennsylvanians. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at HTyler@HAPonline.org or (717) 433-1997. We stand ready to assist in this vital work.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Heather Tyler'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Tyler
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy