



The Hospital + Healthsystem  
Association of Pennsylvania

*Leading for Better Health*

June 11, 2024

The Honorable Stephen Kinsey  
Chair, House Human Services Committee  
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 202201  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2201

The Honorable Doyle Heffley  
Minority Chair, House Human Services Committee  
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 202122  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2122

Dear Chairman Kinsey and Chairman Heffley:

On behalf of more than 235 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) writes to support House Bill 1425. Sponsored by Representative Darisha K. Parker, this bill would direct The Office of Child Development and Early Learning to establish a five-year plan to expand Pennsylvania's maternal home visiting program to cover all 67 counties in the commonwealth.

Pennsylvania hospitals have supported the commonwealth's maternal home visiting program since its inception. The Pennsylvania program, including the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)—which several hospitals have long participated in—has served as a model for the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV).

Nineteen counties are currently designated by March of Dimes as low-access or maternity care deserts. Maternal home visiting programs serve vulnerable families with services including providing postpartum care; conducting screenings and providing referrals for postpartum depression; providing guidance on breastfeeding, safe sleep practices, injury prevention, and nutrition; among a wide range of topics. The NFP is specifically designed to improve prenatal and maternal health outcomes, child health, and economic self-sufficiency.

Health care challenges are particularly amplified in rural communities with nearly half of Pennsylvania women in rural areas living more than 30 minutes from a birthing hospital. Several counties designated as rural are served through Pennsylvania's maternal home visiting program, increasing access to care, and decreasing the preventable risks associated with maternal morbidity and mortality.

HAP supports expanding and collaborating with existing, evidence-based home visiting programs. Such programs have shown positive impact on reducing incidences of child abuse and neglect; improvement in birth outcomes, such as decreased pre-term births and low-birthweight babies; improved school readiness for children; and increased high school graduation rates for mothers participating in the program.

On behalf of the hospital community, HAP supports House Bill 1425. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [SWatkins@HAPonline.org](mailto:SWatkins@HAPonline.org) or by phone (814) 442-7176.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Watkins  
Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Policy

c: The Honorable Darisha K. Parker; Members of the House Human Services Committee