



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

May 17, 2023

The Honorable Joe Pittman
Majority Leader
Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203041
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3041

The Honorable Jay Costa
Minority Leader
Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203043
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Dear Leader Pittman and Leader Costa:

On behalf of The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, we express our support for Senate Bill 500 PN 484, as passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sponsored by Senator Brooks, known as "Owen's Law." Representing 235 member organizations across the commonwealth, our charge is to support equitable access to care for all Pennsylvanians. SB 500 PN 484 achieves this mission by ensuring that all communities can provide life-changing and lifesaving care for some of our most vulnerable patients, medically compromised babies.

SB 500 PN 484 requires private health insurers to provide coverage and reimbursement separate from any diagnosis-related group (DRG) payment the hospital receives for an episode of care, in this case delivering a baby, and Medical Assistance for medically prescribed pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM). This will allow hospitals with limited resources—like safety net hospitals and hospitals in rural areas—to begin including or expanding their criteria for the use of PDHM in treatment plans for more babies. In short, SB 500 PN 484 expands access to PDHM and decreases hospital stays and health care costs by avoiding the need for other, more costly and invasive, medical interventions.

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. In addition, 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).

In very low birth-weight babies and other medically compromised infants, 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.



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Again, the hospital community supports work on this important issue and asks you to prioritize consideration of SB 500 PN 484 by the full Senate as soon as possible and to urge members of your caucuses to vote yes.

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.

Sincerely,

Heather Tyler
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

c: The Honorable Michele Brooks