

SB 255 Correctional Services - Pregnant Incarcerated Individuals - Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment

Senator West, Lead Sponsor Judicial Proceedings Committee Hearing: February 6, 2020

SUPPORT

The Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine (MDDCSAM) is a chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and represents physicians and associated healthcare professionals from different disciplines with expertise in treatment of addiction, including obstetrics, internal medicine, family medicine, emergency medicine, psychiatry, pharmacy, nursing, social work and counseling. Our goals are to diagnose, treat, and advocate for people with the chronic disease of addiction and its related problems.

MDDCSAM strongly supports expanding access to evidence-based, patient-centered treatment for all those with addiction. As such, we support Senate Bill 255, which requires that pregnant incarcerated women, up to 12-weeks postpartum, be screened for substance use disorder and referred to reproductive health and substance use disorder assessment and treatment, including initiation or continuation of medications for addiction treatment, as appropriate.

Between 1992 and 2012, the proportion of pregnant women admitted to substance use disorder treatment in the U.S. who reported history of prescription opioid misuse increased from 2% to 28% and the number of women with opioid use disorder at time of labor and delivery more than quadrupled from 1999 to 2014. Harms of untreated substance use disorder in pregnancy include maternal death, poor fetal growth, preterm birth, stillbirth, neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and possible other specific birth defects. According to the 2017 statement by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, “For pregnant women with an opioid use disorder, opioid agonist pharmacotherapy is the recommended therapy and is preferable to medically supervised withdrawal because withdrawal is associated with high relapse rates, which lead to worse outcomes.”

The proposed legislation would ensure that incarcerated pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorders would have access to evidence-based and guideline consistent screening, assessment and treatment, which is likely to improve both maternal and fetal outcomes in Maryland.

MDDCSAM is committed to being an active participant in addressing the public health problems of substance misuse, addiction, and overdose. We look forward to discussing this issue further and stand ready to assist as we collectively work to expand access to treatment for all Marylanders with the chronic disease of addiction. *We urge a favorable vote on SB 255.*
