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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
Maryland Chapter



ACOG
The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Maryland Section

TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Mike McKay

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 20, 2019

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 142 – *Family Law – Opioid-Exposed Newborns and Parents Addicted to Opioids – Mobile Application (I'm Alive Today App)*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (MDACOG) submit this letter of **opposition** for House Bill 142.

House Bill 142 requires a local department of social services to assess the risk of harm to and safety of an opioid-exposed newborn. The Social Services Administration in the Department of Human Services must develop a mobile application to be used by parents who are determined to have opioid addictions that could result in harm or potential harm to a child as a means of confirming a parent is safely caring for their child.

Though House Bill 142 ostensibly attempts to provide a tool toward combating Maryland's heroin and opioid epidemic, as well as enhancing the safety of opioid-exposed newborns, it creates obligations based on presumptions for which there is no evidence. The mobile app could lead to an assumption that just because a parent checks in on the mobile app that all is okay even if it is not and/or conversely that if a mother doesn't check in that there is a problem even if it is only because the parent may have lost their phone or it was not working at the time of required check in. Care of these parents and their babies requires in person contact, not remote communication. While well intended, passage of House Bill 142 would result in a waste of limited State and local resources that could otherwise be used toward more effective strategies to combat this crisis. As such, MedChi, MDAAP, and MDACOG oppose House Bill 142 and urge an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

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