

# Maryland families for safe birth

## Birth Options and Access

### **WHO:**

We are grassroots, consumer-driven group of women and families in Maryland focused on expanding access to culturally appropriate, woman-centered, evidence-based maternity care.

### **WHAT:**

Our goals include:

- Lowering Maryland's Cesarean section rate
- Closing and eliminating the racial disparity gap in maternity care

### **HOW:**

To meet our goals, Maryland needs legislative change in maternity care to support:

- Removing barriers that unnecessarily limit freestanding birth centers
- VBAC access in all setting by all providers
- Transparency in reporting of Cesarean section and VBAC rates by providers, broken down by race.
- Mandated insurance coverage for all licensed midwives and for perinatal healthcare workers, including doulas, beginning with Medicaid

### **WHERE:**

Throughout Maryland, including YOUR district, Maryland families need better options and access for maternity care.

### **WHY:**

Maryland's cesarean section rate, 35.2%, is one of the highest in the country. C-section rates of over 15% unnecessarily put mothers and babies at risk, according to the World Health Organization. There is only one freestanding birth center in the entire state. Many counties have no labor and delivery units. When compared with other states, Maryland women face a shortage of options and access in maternity care that limits their ability to make choices about their reproductive health care.

In addition, women seeking to make choices during pregnancy and birth in large parts of Maryland consistently report being denied evidence-based informed consent and facing threats and coercion, including threats of court orders or calling child protective services, for pursuing birth options and choices that are readily available to women in other states.