



Representative Anita Somani MD
11th House District

HCR 16 Sponsor Testimony

Chair Pavliga, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today on HCR 16 with my joint sponsor, Representative Ray. I appreciate Rep Ray recognizing the value of this resolution and the opportunity to work with her. This resolution emphasizes the importance of perinatal mental health awareness and support.

The perinatal period is defined as the time frame between pregnancy and a child's first birthday. It is a time of rapid change for both mothers and babies, and it is also a time when mothers may begin to struggle with their mental health. Increasing awareness and access to care for perinatal mental health conditions is of utmost importance, as nearly 75% of mothers with these conditions do not receive adequate treatment. As an Ob/Gyn we are often the first to recognize that there's a problem but there is often stigma around feeling depressed during pregnancy. Often people don't know that Perinatal mental health can affect all mothers and birthing people across socioeconomic statuses, Black women specifically are twice as likely to suffer from these conditions while also being less likely to receive treatment. This is a silent health crisis that can impact the mother's ability to bond with their child, to function at work or school, and to maintain healthy relationships. As a society we need to do better both from the standpoint of supporting families during that first year and personally by checking in with your friends and family.

HCR 16 recognizes the importance of perinatal mental health and calls upon our fellow legislators to support future legislation to improve perinatal mental health outcomes. By creating awareness and understanding of perinatal mental health in the family we can begin to improve outcomes and hopefully move to better legislation. Policies such as extended family leave, better childcare reimbursements, and increased funding for childcare facilities are all ways to reduce the stress and anxiety related to returning to work after having a baby. Chair Pavliga, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today, and I welcome any questions you may have.



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