



October 11, 2023

Re: A letter of support for HB 7

Chair Edwards, Vice LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney and Members of the House Finance Committee.

On behalf of Philips, I urge the Committee to pass HB 7, a comprehensive infant health bill that among other things, would have the Department of Health issue a RFP to create an Ohio-tailored pregnancy app for expectant mothers who are on Medicaid. As this letter describes, pregnancy apps are platforms to connect pregnant families to maternal health resources and programs that Ohio has already created, but which expectant mothers may not know exist.

As you may know, Philips is a health technology company focused on improving people's lives, which employs around 600 in Ohio at facilities in Highland Heights and Beachwood. The company is one of the world's largest ultrasound and obstetrics monitoring companies and manages the world's most downloaded pregnancy app (Pregnancy+). Given this legacy, the company applauds legislation that improves maternal health.

Unfortunately, maternal health outcomes remain poor:

- **Mortality:** The nation's maternal mortality rate rose by 40% year over year to 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021, up from 23.8 deaths per 100,000 in 2020.¹
- **Preterm births:** Roughly 10 percent of U.S. births are preterm,² and preterm births cost the US \$26 billion per year.³
- **C-Section rate:** 31 percent of all U.S. births are C-Sections, double the World Health Organization's recommendation.⁴
- **Ohio Outcomes:** In Ohio, 155,000 women live in maternity care deserts. Preterm birth rates are 10.6%, up from 10.2% in 2011. The March of Dimes estimates that preterm births cost Ohio \$731 million in societal costs.⁵

While many reasons contribute to these outcomes, many women may simply lack awareness of healthy prenatal and postpartum behaviors. For example, over 32% of all pregnant women on Medicaid don't start care until the second trimester or later.⁶ Many don't take prenatal supplements, continue to smoke, and miss routine checkups. In addition, "***babies born to women with low health literacy had greater odds of preterm birth before 34 weeks, small for gestational age status, and low birth weight.***"⁷ According to this article, women "***with health literacy educational sessions, displayed positive changes in nutritional behavior, physical activity, prenatal care, and intake of dietary supplements.***"⁸

¹ ["Why maternal mortality rate surged by 40% when deaths are preventable," USA Today, March 16, 2023](#)

² [March of Dimes: Fighting Premature Birth](#)

³ [March of Dimes: Economic and Societal Impact Costs of Preterm Births](#). According to March of Dimes, societal costs of each preterm birth includes medical care, early intervention services and lost productivity.

⁴ ["Unnecessary C-sections are a problem in the US.," USA Today, 12/21/20](#)

⁵ [March of Dimes Report Card for Ohio](#) and [March of Dimes Ohio Fact Page](#)

⁶ See [Timing and Adequacy of Prenatal Care in the United States, 2016](#)

⁷ See [Study: Mom's Low Health Literacy Puts Herself and Her Newborn at Risk | MedPage Today](#)

⁸ See [Maternal Health Literacy: Educating Mothers to Keep Them Safe - SWHR](#)

Yesterday's pregnancy book that educated so many families on what to expect has morphed into a pregnancy app today. For example, Philips Pregnancy+ app was actively used by ~58,500 Ohioans last year of ~130,000 live births. Among this group, 50% of app users were women on Medicaid and 45% were high school educated or less. (Note, there are at least 25 pregnancy apps on the market as tracked by *Forbes*).⁹

Pregnancy+'s purpose is to creatively inform families about healthy prenatal and postpartum behaviors. For example, app users have access to 1000s of articles based on their interests and where they are in their pregnancy. This content could range from having your first trimester ultrasound, to the importance of prenatal vitamins, smoking cessation, proper oral health care, to managing stress, to budgeting post baby, to prepping a go-bag, to healthy recipes, etc.

Philips supports HB 7 because Section 4 (pgs. 39-41) recognizes the important role of pregnancy apps as platforms to connect Ohio's existing maternal health resources and programs to the tens of thousands of Ohio women using an app. Importantly, the bill would require an app to promote Ohio's current maternal health programs. Such an effort is also happening in Michigan, which awarded Philips a RFP to build a Michigan-tailored app for pregnant Michiganders who are on Medicaid.¹⁰

A 2017 study looked at how a pregnancy app impacted Wyoming's Medicaid population. It concluded "***app usage was associated with improvements in prenatal visit completion and reduced incidence of low-birth weight delivery.***"¹¹

Another study that reviewed 29 online reports of pregnancy apps concluded that these apps "***reduce gestational weight gain, increase intakes of vegetables and fruit, to quit smoking cessation, and support health care for prevention of asthma and infections during pregnancy,***" but said more evidence is still needed.¹²

As three out of five maternal deaths in the U.S. are preventable according to the CDC, increasing awareness of healthy prenatal and postpartum behaviors will increase the probability that moms will have a healthier pregnancy.¹³

For these reasons, Philips urges the Committee to pass HB 7 with Section 4 included. For more information, please contact Evan Hoffman, director of state and local government relations for Philips at evan.hoffman@philips.com. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Evan Hoffman

Director of State and Local Government Relations, Philips North America

⁹ See [10 Best Pregnancy Apps Of 2023 – Forbes Health](#), Philips Pregnancy+ scored the best.

¹⁰ See [Michigan HHS Adopts App to Aid Pregnant, Postpartum People \(govtech.com\)](#).

¹¹ See [Impact of a Mobile Health Application on User Engagement and Pregnancy Outcomes Among Wyoming Medicaid Members | Telemedicine and e-Health \(liebertpub.com\)](#)

¹² See [JMIR mHealth and uHealth - The Usability and Effectiveness of Mobile Health Technology-Based Lifestyle and Medical Intervention Apps Supporting Health Care During Pregnancy: Systematic Review](#)

¹³ See [Pregnancy-Related Deaths Happen Before, During, and Up to a Year After Delivery, CDC](#)