

WHEREAS, The State's statutes and regulations direct the screening of newborn infants for hereditary and congenital disorders in the hospital prior to discharge; and

WHEREAS, Hospital stays of less than 24 hours after childbirth typically result in unsatisfactory PKU specimens as a result of insufficient milk feedings, and the incidence of unsatisfactory PKU specimens has risen from 5% in 1989, to 30% in 1993, and in that same year 25% of infants with unsatisfactory PKU specimens never received an adequate and timely subsequent screening; and

WHEREAS, Insurers and nonprofit health service plans have implemented benefit plans generally covering no more than 24 hours of postpartum stay in a hospital, despite little or no scientific support for the efficacy and safety of this policy for the general population; and

WHEREAS, The "Guidelines for Perinatal Care", published by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, recommend a hospital stay of 48 hours after childbirth; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly to maximize the prevention of mental retardation from PKU and other hereditary and congenital disorders; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article 48A - Insurance Code

354KK.

(a) In this section, "child wellness services" means a preventive activity designed to:

- (1) Protect children from morbidity and mortality; and
- (2) Promote child development.

(b) The provisions of this section apply to a nonprofit health service plan that:

- (1) Is written on an expense incurred basis;
- (2) Provides coverage for a family member of the insured; and
- (3) Is delivered or issued for delivery in the State.

(c) (1) A nonprofit health service plan shall include under the family member coverage a minimum package of child wellness services that are consistent with:

- (i) Public health policy;
- (ii) Professional standards; and
- (iii) Scientific evidence of effectiveness.

(2) A child wellness services package required under this subsection shall cover at least: