

MARYLAND LEGISLATORS SHOULD TAKE ACTION TO STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS FOR PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS OF LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTHCARE!

Maryland has strong laws in place, but there is more to do. We are calling on our elected representatives to do as much as possible to protect providers and patients during the 2026 legislative session.

Priority Updates: While Maryland's shielding law is robust, there are several additions needed to strengthen protections for providers and patients, and bring Maryland in line with other states who have comprehensive shielding protections.

Expanding Provider & Patient Protections: Maryland's shielding law should be updated to clarify that it applies "**regardless of the patient's location.**" This language would strengthen protections both for Maryland clinic-based **providers who care for patients traveling to our state** and **Maryland telemedicine providers** who wish to provide medication abortion and gender affirming care to patients in restrictive states. Eight states' shield laws currently contain these protections.

Prescription Confidentiality: Maryland law should be updated to protect the **safety and confidentiality of patients and prescribers of legally protected health care** by limiting the required information that is included on prescription labels. In 2025, three states passed protections for providers, and California recently passed a law to shield provider and patient names from certain prescriptions.

Restrict Federal Cooperation: Maryland law should be strengthened to **bar state actors from cooperating with federal law enforcement inquiries or investigations** concerning legally-protected health care. Massachusetts and Vermont have recently added federal entities to their shielding laws.

Additional protections to consider:

- **Shielding Reciprocity:** Maryland law could be enhanced to include a **reciprocity mechanism** that enables it to protect individuals within the state whose prior provision or support of, or access to reproductive health care, in another state was shielded by the other state.
- **Enhancing Personal Safety:** Maryland's existing law protecting against clinic violence and harassment could be improved to prohibit specific acts of violence against clinic staff and patients, protect the physical space around clinics, and provide enhanced online privacy for patients and clinic workers.
- **Protecting Emergency Care:** Maryland could establish a state [EMTALA law](#) to ensure the right to emergency medical care remains in Maryland, and that it includes emergency abortion care per the [2022 Biden Administration guidance](#). Senator Lam introduced [SB447](#) in 2025 but it did not pass.
- **Enhancing Patient Privacy:** Maryland could require patients to be notified of health records and sensitive information requests related to federal investigations, and limit what information providers are required to record in health records related to legally protected care.

Maryland is at the forefront of reproductive health and gender affirming care protections and we can continue to strengthen these protections by implementing the above enhancements. The following organizations call on Maryland legislators to implement the enhanced protections detailed above:







health access fund.



For further information, please contact us at: alice@advancemaryland.org