



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 8, 2023

Senator Regina Birdsell, Chair
And Members of the Senate HHS Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: **SB 175 (Medicaid for Mothers)**

Dear Senator Birdsell and Members of the Committee:

As the Director of the Office of Public Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, I write to respectfully register our **support for SB 175**, which would provide needed Medicaid assistance to new mothers. In particular, I would like to address the provisions of the bill that would extend postpartum Medicaid benefits to 12 months – something which is supported by Catholic Bishops around the country precisely because it is a pro-life policy.

When the Diocese of Manchester reviews a piece of legislation, our inquiry begins with a look at how the bill affects human dignity and the common good, the two principles which are at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching, and which of course are also the foundation stones of the body politic established by the state and federal constitutions. *See* NH Const. Part 1 Art.1 (government is “instituted for the general good”). We think that SB 175 unquestionably advances those principles.

Anyone who has been a parent or who simply knows a new mother can testify to the challenges of the first year of motherhood, and those challenges obviously are all the greater for mothers who are in financial need. SB 175 is an important way to support these new mothers (and indirectly their babies) at an especially critical juncture in their lives. As I think the proponents of this postpartum policy proposal have shown, the extending of postpartum Medicaid coverage will provide critical public health benefits to this cohort of new mothers, especially in areas like behavioral health and substance misuse.



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The family is the keystone of our society, and there are few ways that we can better serve the common good than by prioritizing the needs of mothers and their babies. Each mother whose health and well-being can be impacted by the postpartum and other provisions of this bill translates into at least one more mother and at least one more child with prospects for a better future than what otherwise would have been in store for them.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that you recommend ought to pass on SB 175.

Thank you as always for your kind consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Dunn, Jr.", written over the typed name and title.

Robert E. Dunn, Jr., Esq.
Director, Office of Public Policy