

December 12, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-222, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The 50 undersigned organizations dedicated to improving maternal and child health respectfully request that you include both H.R. 4995, the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act of 2019, and H.R. 4996, the Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services Act of 2019, in any end-of-year package. This strong bipartisan legislation, which was unanimously reported out of the Committee on Energy & Commerce, will improve the lives of women and families by helping to reverse our Nation's rising rate of maternal mortality.

The United States is the only industrialized nation where maternal deaths are on the rise. Each year, an estimated 700 women in the United States die during pregnancy and in the postpartum period from complications related to pregnancy. Of these maternal deaths, an estimated 60 percent are preventable. Stark racial disparities in maternal health outcomes persist; Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women are roughly three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes as white women. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 60 percent of pregnancy-related deaths occur in the days between delivery and one year postpartum.

Last year, thanks to Congress' extensive work and leadership in addressing maternal mortality, two bills to improve maternal health outcomes became law: P.L. 115-344, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, and P.L. 115-320, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act. These laws are helping us take steps forward in preventing maternal deaths and improving maternal health outcomes. However, fully addressing the maternal mortality crisis, reducing severe maternal morbidities, and eliminating disparities in maternal health outcomes will require additional robust action and continued Congressional attention. Now, Congress has the opportunity to build on last year's progress by passing both H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 to help hospitals and maternity care providers implement clinically proven best practices, support state efforts to extend Medicaid coverage for women to one year postpartum, increase access to maternity care in rural and underserved areas, and work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health.

We urge you to build on Congress' commitment to addressing our Nation's rising maternal mortality rate. Congress must take meaningful action now to eliminate preventable pregnancy-related deaths and improve maternal health outcomes by passing both H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
2020 Mom / Mom Congress
AFE Foundation
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
America's Essential Hospitals
America's Health Insurance Plans
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Physicians
American Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Public Health Association
Anthem, Inc.
APS Foundation of America, Inc
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Center for Law and Social Policy
Coalition for Disability Health Equity
Community Catalyst Women's Health Program
Expecting Health
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Guttmacher Institute
Hyperemesis Education & Research Foundation
March of Dimes
MomsRising
NAACP
National Accreta Foundation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
Nurse-Family Partnership
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association

Physician Assistant Education Association
Preeclampsia Foundation
Save The Mommies Inc
Sepsis Alliance
Shades Of Blue Project
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
The Catholic Health Association of the United States
The PPROM Foundation
The Shane Foundation
Young Invincibles

