

December 4, 2020

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

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

The 84 undersigned national organizations dedicated to improving maternal health **urge you to swiftly pass the bipartisan *Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act (H.R. 4995)* and the bipartisan *Helping MOMS Act of 2020 (H.R. 4996)*** as soon as possible – whether as part of the next spending package or another appropriate legislative vehicle before the end of the 116th Congress. Final passage of H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 is a critical and foundational next step in Congress’ work to address maternal mortality and improve maternal health.

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 in September 2020. These two bills represent years of Congressional and stakeholder work to craft legislation that will address our nation’s maternal health crisis. The legislation combines proposals from several stand-alone bills introduced on a bipartisan basis by members of both chambers during the 115th and 116th Congresses. Both H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 have been scrutinized and improved by committee hearings, committee markups, and stakeholder engagement. It is time to pass this legislation into law. The need is dire and there is much work to do.

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 inequities in maternal health outcomes persist; Black and Indigenous 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. The COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating the maternal health crisis. A recent study from the CDC suggests that pregnant women are at a significantly higher risk for severe outcomes, including death, from COVID-19 than non-pregnant women.

Legislation passed by Congress in 2018 – the *Preventing Maternal Deaths Act* and the *Improving Access to Maternity Care Act* – is helping the United States better understand how and why women are dying or experiencing severe morbidity during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Passage of H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 would build on these efforts and move the United States from data to action in key areas.

Specifically, this legislation would increase access to maternity care in rural and underserved areas, help maternity care providers and hospitals implement clinically proven best practices, support state efforts to extend Medicaid coverage for women to one year postpartum, and make progress in the work needed to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in maternal health outcomes.

We are grateful for your commitment to improving maternal health and ending preventable maternal death in the United States. We urge you to pass H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996 this year because our nation's moms and families cannot wait.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom
America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Heart Association
American Hospital Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Public Health Association
Anthem, Inc.
APS Foundation of America, Inc.
Association of Community Affiliated Plans
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN)
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative
The Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Community Resilience
Center for Health Equity, University of California, San Francisco
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Centering Healthcare Institute
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Children's HealthWatch
CityMatCH
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Community Catalyst
Every Mother Counts
Families USA
Family Voices

First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
Guttmacher Institute
Health Care Service Corporation
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia
HealthyWomen
Hyperemesis Education and Research Foundation
Johns Hopkins Women's Mood Disorders Center
Lifeline4Moms Center, University of Massachusetts Medical School
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Maternal Safety Foundation
Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA)
Mom Congress
MomsRising
NASTAD
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Healthy Start Association
National Institute for Children's Health Quality - NICHQ
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
Nurse-Family Partnership
Organization of Teratology Information Specialists
Parents as Teachers
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association
Physician Assistant Education Association
Postpartum Support International
Preeclampsia Foundation
Prevent Blindness
Prevention Institute
Primary Maternity Care, LLC
The PPROM Foundation
Restoring Our Own Through Transformation (ROOTT)
Safe States Alliance
Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Women's Health Research
The Joint Commission
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Shane Foundation
Trust for America's Health
United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)
ZERO TO THREE