

December 8, 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 115 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 116<sup>th</sup> 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 115<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> 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  
Aligning for Health  
America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Public Health Association  
Anthem, Inc.  
APS Foundation of America, Inc.  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
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 State Public Health Nutritionists  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Babyscripts  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association  
California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative  
The Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Centene  
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  
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)  
Every Mother Counts  
Families USA  
Family Voices  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Futures Without Violence  
Guttmacher Institute  
Hand to Hold  
Health Care Service Corporation  
HealthConnect One  
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia  
HealthyWomen  
Hyperemesis Education and Research Foundation  
IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA)  
Infant Nutrition Council of America  
Institute for Perinatal Quality Improvement  
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  
NAPHSIS  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
NASTAD  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Birth Equity Collaborative  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Healthy Start Association  
National Institute for Children's Health Quality – NICHQ  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National WIC Association

National Women's Health Network  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
Organization of Teratology Information Specialists  
Palladium  
Parents as Teachers  
Patient Safety Movement Foundation  
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Postpartum Support International  
Preeclampsia Foundation  
PremieWorld, LLC  
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  
Share Our Strength  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Reproductive Investigation  
Society for Women's Health Research  
The 2 Degrees Foundation  
The Joint Commission  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The Shane Foundation  
Trust for America's Health  
United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)  
Vaccinate Your Family  
ZERO TO THREE