



February 12, 2020

The Honorable Veronica Escobar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Escobar:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 134,600 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write in support of the *Defeat Infant and Maternal Mortality Act* (DIMMA).

The AAFP supports the DIMMA Act because the legislation would authorize the Department of Defense to share information with civilian entities for the purpose of understanding the best practices that contributed to the lower infant and maternal mortality rates for military personnel.

According to a 2019 report, the Military Health Systems' (MHS) infant mortality rate between 2008 and 2018 was 2.51 per 1,000 live births which was significantly below the National Perinatal Information Center (NPIC) rate of 4.76 deaths per 1,000 live births. From January 2009 to June 2018, the pregnancy-related mortality ratio in the MHS overall, including the direct care and purchased care systems, was 7.40 deaths per 100,000 live births and lower than the NPIC comparative rate of 11.3 deaths per 100,000 live births.

As a medical society that represents family physicians who treat patients across the lifespan including maternity and newborn care. The AAFP supports this legislation as an important strategy for improving our nation's infant and maternal mortality rates. We believe healthy populations do not occur in isolation or by random circumstance. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that almost 60 percent of maternal deaths were preventable. Improvements occur through investments in research and through strategies to promote structural change, such as access to health care or quality improvement activities. It is important to learn from MHS best practices, which is the bill's intent.

We appreciate the opportunity to support the *Defeat Infant and Maternal Mortality Act* and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-655-4905 or [sclay@aafp.org](mailto:sclay@aafp.org).

Sincerely,

John S. Cullen, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair

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