



May 13, 2021

The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dan Newhouse
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Axne
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Smith and Murkowski and Representatives Newhouse and Axne,

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing more than 133,500 family physicians, residents, and medical students across the country, I write to offer support for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Modernization of Services (MOMS) Act.

The U.S. holds the highest maternal mortality rate out of all industrialized nations, and the rate continues to rise. In 2019, there were over 20 deaths per 100,000 live births in the U.S., which is significantly higher than the previous year.ⁱ Even more concerning, the maternal mortality rate for Black patients was 2.5 times the rate of white patients and 3.5 times the rate for Hispanic women.ⁱⁱ Geographic and socioeconomic challenges can affect access in rural areas where less than half of all women live within a 30-minute drive of obstetric care.ⁱⁱⁱ For many of these women, access to a car or weather and poor infrastructure further exasperates these challenges.

Your legislation seeks to address this alarming trend in maternal mortality by creating a demonstration to train family physicians in rural, community-based settings on maternal care services. It also helps clinicians with procuring technology to advance their practice and instructs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to collect maternal-specific data and prioritize research addressing maternal mortality.

Family physicians in rural settings are often the only clinician available for routine or emergency perinatal health care and delivery. Additionally, when a family physician isn't delivering the baby, it is crucial that continuity of care is maintained postpartum and that the primary care physician can coordinate with the obstetrician after a patient gives birth. By investing in and prioritizing training, technology, data collection, and research, your legislation will help clinicians better serve birthing people in rural areas.

Thank you again for introducing this important legislation. Should you have questions, please contact John Aguilar, Manager of Legislative Affairs, at jaquilar@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

President Ada Stewart, MD <i>Columbia, SC</i>	President-elect Sterling Ransone, MD <i>Deltaville, VA</i>	Board Chair Gary LeRoy, MD <i>Dayton, OH</i>	Directors James Ellzy, MD, <i>Washington, DC</i> Dennis Gingrich, MD, <i>Hershey, PA</i> Tochi Iroku-Malize, MD, <i>Bay Shore, NY</i> Andrew Carroll, MD, <i>Chandler, AZ</i> Steven Furr, MD, <i>Jackson, AL</i> Margot Savoy, MD, <i>Media, PA</i>	Jennifer Brull, MD, <i>Plainville, KS</i> Mary Campagnolo, MD, <i>Bordertown, NJ</i> Todd Shaffer, MD, <i>Lee's Summit, MO</i> Danielle Carter, MD (New Physician Member), <i>Jacksonville, FL</i> Anna Askari, MD (Resident Member), <i>Palm Desert, CA</i> Cynthia Ciccotelli (Student Member), <i>Yardley, PA</i>
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAFPP". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G".

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAFPP
Board Chair, American Academy of Family Physicians

ⁱ Hoyert L., D. (2021). *Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2019*. National Center for Health Statistics. <https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc:103855>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Health Disparities in Rural Women*. (2016). Retrieved May 3, 2021, from <https://www.acog.org/en/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2014/02/health-disparities-in-rural-women>

