

May 5, 2022

The following 67 national organizations supported the below bipartisan letter urging the highest possible funding in Fiscal Year 2023 for federal programs at HRSA, CDC, and NIH to improve maternal health and eliminate inequities in maternal health outcomes. The letter was co-led by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI).

For a copy of the final letter and the full list of Members of Congress who co-signed the letter, please reach out to Alyson Northrup with the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) at [anorthrup@amchp.org](mailto:anorthrup@amchp.org).

National Organizations in Support of FY23 DeGette/Gallagher Maternal Health Approps Dear Colleague Letter;

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
African American Mayors Association  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
Alliance for Black NICU Families  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American Medical Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
APS Foundation of America, Inc  
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Black Mamas Matter Alliance  
Centering Healthcare Institute  
Child First  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Community Catalyst  
Every Mother Counts  
Families USA  
Family Voices  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Futures Without Violence  
Hand to Hold  
HealthConnect One

Healthy Birth Day, Inc.  
Healthy Teen Network  
HealthyWomen  
Johnson & Johnson  
Lamaze International  
March for Moms  
March of Dimes  
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Medela  
Mom Congress  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.  
National Blood Clot Alliance  
National Institute for Children's Health Quality - NICHQ  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium  
National Rural Health Association  
National WIC Association  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
Organization of Teratology Information Specialists  
Parents as Teachers  
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Postpartum Support International  
Prevent Blindness  
Prevention Institute  
RESULTS  
Saint Luke's Health System  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Reproductive Investigation  
The 2 Degrees Foundation  
The Joint Commission  
The Shane Foundation  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

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The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

Our nation continues to face a crisis in maternal health. **As you develop the appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2023, we encourage you to prioritize the highest possible funding level for the below programs that seek to prevent maternal deaths, eliminate inequities in maternal health outcomes, and improve maternal health.**

More women die from pregnancy-related complications in the United States than in any other developed country, and the rate of maternal deaths continues to rise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 700 pregnancy-related deaths occur in the U.S. each year and 60 percent of these deaths are preventable. Major disparities in maternal mortality exist, with Black women three to four times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to die due to pregnancy-related complications and Indigenous women more than twice as likely than non-Hispanic white women to die due to pregnancy-related complications. The latest data from CDC show a marked increase in maternal deaths during the first year of the pandemic. Moreover, for every maternal death that occurs, more than 70 other women suffer severe complications of pregnancy or childbirth.

**Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant** – The Title V MCH Services Block Grant administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is the only federal program of its kind devoted solely to improving the health of all women and children in the United States. This flexible and cost-effective funding source is used by states, territories, and other jurisdictions to address their most critical maternal and child health needs. This includes supporting statewide maternal mortality reviews - the gold standard in maternal mortality surveillance - and implementing strategies to translate recommendations made by maternal mortality review committees to meaningful action. Title V also supports the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health program, a data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative, State Maternal Health Innovation Grants, a demonstration program to implement evidence-based interventions to address critical gaps in maternity care service, and the new Maternal Mental Health Hotline.

**Healthy Start** – HRSA's Healthy Start program provides grants to support community-based strategies to improve perinatal outcomes for women and children in communities throughout the nation. In particular, the Healthy Start program seeks to reduce disparities in infant and maternal mortality by empowering women and

their families to identify and access maternal and infant health services in their communities. To further support healthy maternal outcomes, since FY 2019, Healthy Start programs across the nation have had health care providers on-site to provide clinical services, such as well-woman care and maternity care services, making the Healthy Start program a critical component of federal efforts to reduce both maternal and infant mortality.

**Safe Motherhood and Infant Health** – This portfolio of programs at CDC supports a broad range of activities that seek to improve the health of moms and babies and reduce disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. This includes implementation of the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act (P.L. 115-344) through the Enhancing Reviews and Surveillance to Eliminate Maternal Mortality (ERASE MM) Program to provide funding, technical assistance, and guidance to state maternal mortality review committees. It also includes support for perinatal quality collaboratives, which are state or multi-state networks of teams working to improve the quality of care for mothers and babies. Among other activities, Safe Motherhood supports CDC’s HEAR HER Campaign, a communication campaign to increase awareness of warning signs that could lead to pregnancy-related death or delivery complications and strengthen patient and provider communication.

**National Institutes of Health** – Research is critically important to optimizing the health of women and their families in the United States and identifying the causes behind pregnancy-related deaths and complications. The vast majority of research in pregnancy in the U.S. occurs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Broadly, 20 of 27 institutes at the NIH support at least one grant or project related to pregnancy-related research, with the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) consistently providing the greatest support of perinatal research in the United States. NICHD's work includes the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units Network (MFMU), a network of 12 centers across the country that conduct clinical studies to improve maternal, fetal, and neonatal health. NICHD is also working to advance safe and effective therapies for pregnant and lactating women as recommended in 2019 by the federal Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (authorized under P.L. 114-255). NICHD funding also supports research to address gaps in our understanding of the best way to support pregnant and postpartum women with a substance use disorder. Strengthened, prioritized support for maternal health research at the NIH is crucial to fully understanding the health inequities and disparities in outcomes that the U.S. is facing.

Providing strong and sustained funding for each of these programs is critical to addressing a maternal health crisis in the U.S. that has only worsened during the pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of this request to prioritize the highest possible funding level for programs that seek to prevent maternal deaths, eliminate inequities in maternal health outcomes, and improve maternal health.

Sincerely,