

December 10, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Neal, Chairman Pallone, and Chairman Scott:

Thank you for taking action to address maternal mortality and morbidity in H.R. 3, the *Lower Drug Costs Now Act*. As national organizations at the forefront of improving outcomes for women and their families, we value the critical investments in public health that you have prioritized, and your recognition of the urgent need to address the maternal health crisis in the United States.

Pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period are critical and fragile times for mothers and infants. Proper prenatal care, early maternal support, and planning to care for a new baby are essential to healthy births and positive maternal and infant outcomes. Unfortunately, for a growing number of women, particularly women of color and Native women, persistent barriers during the prenatal and postpartum periods lead to significant negative health outcomes and, in the most extreme cases, death.

The inclusion of a significant expansion of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program in H.R. 3 makes critical steps to expand the reach of home visiting to address the causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. Evidence-based home visiting programs are an important part of a continuum services for at-risk families, and the impact of voluntary home visiting in rural and urban communities alike has been well documented through research for over three decades. As states and localities seek to deliver proven programs to improve outcomes in this area, your bill allows for the targeting of additional dollars to high-needs communities.

Home visiting empowers, educates, and builds resiliency in mothers facing a variety of adverse circumstances that affect their health in the perinatal period and into their child's early years, thus creating opportunities to impact positive changes for families. We appreciate your recognition that a meaningful increase to MIECHV will positively impact mothers and their families at risk of maternal mortality and morbidity.

Our organizations were grateful for bipartisan support to reauthorize MIECHV in early 2018. That reauthorization meant certainty for states and local programs, who work each day to deliver home visiting programs to families that need them. Because of that reauthorization, we also know that home visiting is already doing valuable and highly recognized work in communities today to address this crisis of poor maternal health outcomes, disparate access to care, and gaps in connections to services.

Thank you again for your leadership to devote these critical resources now to MIECHV, in order to improve the lives of women who are at-risk and their families.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Heart Association
American Psychological Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Center for Law and Social Policy
Child Care Aware® of America
Child First
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Home & Aid
Children's Home Society of America
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Every Mother Counts
Expecting Health at Genetic Alliance
Family Connects International at the Center for Child and Family Health
Families USA
First Five Years Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
Healthy Families America
HIPPI USA
Hyperemesis Education and Research Foundation
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Infant Nutrition Council of America
Jewish Federations of North America
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

MomsRising
National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Family, State and Community Engagement
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Family Support Network
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Children's Health Quality
National SafeCare Training and Research Center at Georgia State University
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nurse-Family Partnership
Organization of Teratology Information Specialists
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Parents as Teachers
Parent Child+
Prevent Child Abuse America
Results for America
Save the Children
Save the Mommies
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Tennyson Center for Children
The Tatia Oden French Memorial Foundation
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
Zero to Three