

May 8, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services & Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you move forward with the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services & Education Appropriations bill, the below undersigned organizations strongly urge your Subcommittee to allocate \$5 million for Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression, as authorized by Section 10005 of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-146), at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), within the Department of Health and Human Services.

Maternal mental health disorders, commonly known as postpartum depression (PPD), are very common, impacting up to 1 in 5 women (or approximately 20%) during pregnancy or up to one year post delivery. PPD is the most common complication of pregnancy. Symptoms can include depression, multiple forms of anxiety, or even a severe condition known as postpartum psychosis. Postpartum psychosis carries an increased risk of suicide, which is the second leading cause of death in new mothers.

These funds will increase access to screening and treatment for postpartum depression by providing additional resources to states to build on successful local efforts to develop and implement programs to improve and increase both screening and treatment, tailored to the needs of women and families in various geographical, ethnic, racial and cultural communities. Better screening and treatment of maternal depression will not only prevent adverse outcomes for women, children and their families, it will create significant cost savings through early detection and prevention.

As the Subcommittee develops appropriations legislation for FY 2018, we respectfully request that Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression be allocated the fully authorized amount of \$5 million at HRSA. Monies allocated to this program will see incalculable positive outcomes for mothers and families being faced with maternal mental health challenges across our great nation. We believe that HRSA is well positioned to administer this program. Specifically, HRSA's specifically its Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports programs and services in

all 50 states to improve women's health before, during and beyond pregnancy. HRSA also has a demonstrated history of working successfully with the health care provider community.

In addition to appropriations allocations for the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression program, we strongly recommend that it be administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports programs and services in all 50 states to improve women's health before, during and beyond pregnancy. HRSA also has a demonstrated history of working successfully with the health care provider community.

The 21st Century Cures Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, and we urge the Committee to prioritize implementation of this critical program. We look forward to working with you to address this all too common condition. For more information, please contact Jamie Zahlaway Belsito, Advocacy Chair, the National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health at jamie@mmhcoalition.com or 978.998.1160.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Art Therapy Association

The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecologists

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychological Association

Arizona's Children Association

AspireMN (formerly known as the Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies)
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association for Behavioral Healthcare

Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies

Benchmarks of North Carolina

Children's Law Center

Clinical Social Work Association

Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

Indiana Association of Resources & Child Advocacy

Mental Health America

March of Dimes

Moms Mental Health Initiative

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health National Association of Social Workers

National Organization of State Associations for Children National Register of Health Service Psychologists

New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc. NHMH (No Health without Mental Health)

Postpartum Support International

Postpartum Support Virginia

The Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc. Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine

Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families Treatment Communities of America

Utah Maternal Mental Health Collaborative Young Invincibles

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