

September 14, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member Green:

Our organizations commend you for holding today's hearing, "Better Data and Better Outcomes: Reducing Maternal Mortality in the U.S." We would like to express our support for the discussion draft of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, sponsored by Representatives Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Ryan Costello (R-PA) that is being considered today, which mirrors S. 1112, the Maternal Health Accountability Act, as recently advanced by the Senate HELP Committee.

Our nation faces a growing crisis in 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. Major disparities in maternal mortality exist, with black women three to four times more likely than white women to die during pregnancy or shortly after birth. Moreover, for every maternal death that occurs, an estimated 100 other women suffer severe complications of pregnancy or childbirth. We must act now to reverse this trend and save mothers' lives.

We urge the Subcommittee to address maternal mortality by supporting the work of state maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). MMRCs are multidisciplinary groups of local experts in maternal, infant, and public health that examine cases of maternal death. Maternal mortality review is a cyclical process that does not end by simply counting and characterizing deaths, but must be followed with action by putting the recommendations of the committee to work in hospitals, communities, or policies.

While these efforts take place at the state or jurisdiction level, federal support will accelerate progress toward ensuring that every state has a high-functioning MMRC. This legislation will also advance efforts among states to standardize the collection and analysis of data. With better data and information, we can develop a national understanding of why mothers are dying and what we collectively can do to reverse this tragic trend.

We look forward to continuing to work together to see this bipartisan bill move forward in Congress and enacted into law.

Sincerely,

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
March of Dimes
Preeclampsia Foundation
Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine