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Bipartisan House Members Introduce Bill to Create Task Force on Pregnant and Lactating Women to Ensure Safer Medications, Collaboration on Research and Wider Dissemination of Information
SMFM-Supported Legislation Introduced in House of Representatives

WASHINGTON, May 17, 2016—The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine announced today that Representatives Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) and Cathy Castor (D-FL) <http://herrerabeutler.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398711> introduced HR 5219, the [Safe Medications for Moms and Babies Act](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives that, if passed into law, would create a Task Force on Pregnant Women and Lactating Women.

SMFM held a workshop on the issue of medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding at its annual meeting in February 2015, which was co-sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

“We are so pleased that Representatives Herrera Beutler and Castor are leading this effort in the US House of Representatives,” stated Mary Norton, M.D., president of SMFM. “SMFM has long supported more and better collaboration and coordination amongst and between federal agencies, experts, patients and industry when it comes to pregnant and breastfeeding women. As more women with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, depression and asthma are becoming pregnant, safe and effective medications to manage these ongoing conditions throughout their pregnancy and beyond are needed. This legislation is a great first step toward ensuring that health care providers and women get the information they need.”

“While medicine has made amazing advances in the past 75 years, there’s undoubtedly a gap in what we know about the effects of medication on pregnant women and their babies. It’s critical that expectant mothers have the information to make the best decisions when it comes to taking medication. I appreciate Congresswoman Castor’s partnership in fixing the gap, and better protecting the health of mothers and infants,” said U.S. Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler.

“Expectant mothers and their doctors should have adequate and accurate information about effects of medications used during pregnancy as well as when nursing to ensure the best health outcomes for our most vulnerable ones. We know too little about current medications on the market and their risks for mother and child -- more research must be done. I thank Representative Herrera Beutler for joining me in leading this effort with the Safe Medications for Moms and Babies Act, aimed at improving the quality of data and information on medication use during pregnancy and breastfeeding,” added U.S. Representative Kathy Castor.

In 2014, SMFM began working with the March of Dimes, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics to form the [Coalition to Advance Maternal Therapeutics](#). The Coalition has been working to educate and inform Congress and other policymakers on the issues related to lack of data and information on medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

The legislation, if passed into law, will create a task force housed within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that will improve federal interagency and key stakeholder communication, coordination and collaboration to advance research and information sharing on medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding as well as require an annual report from the FDA on the implementation of its new drug labeling guidance on pregnancy and lactation. The Task Force will include federal agencies such as National Institutes of Health, U.S. Food & Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as public stakeholders from professional societies, consumer representation and industry representation to prioritize and identify gaps in research and recommend a path forward on greater inclusion of pregnant and breastfeeding women in research.

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The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (est. 1977) is the premiere membership organization for obstetricians/gynecologists who have additional formal education and training in maternal-fetal medicine. The society is devoted to reducing high-risk pregnancy complications by sharing expertise through continuing education to its 2,000 members on the latest pregnancy assessment and treatment methods. It also serves as an advocate for improving public policy, and expanding research funding and opportunities for maternal-fetal medicine. The group hosts an annual meeting in which groundbreaking new ideas and research in the area of maternal-fetal medicine are shared and discussed. For more information visit www.smfm.org.