

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
1107 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ryan Costello
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Herrera Beutler, DeGette, and Costello:

On behalf of the undersigned physician organizations dedicated to the advancement of maternal health, we write to express our strong support for H.R. 1318, the bipartisan *Preventing Maternal Deaths Act*. This legislation addresses a troubling national public health issue: rising rates of maternal mortality in the United States.

More women in the U.S. die from pregnancy complications than in any other developed country.ⁱ The U.S. saw a 26% increase in the maternal mortality rate from 18.8 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 23.8 in 2014.ⁱⁱ Black women are disproportionately impacted by this disturbing trend. In 2011, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic white women was 12.5 deaths per 100,000 live births compared with 42.8 deaths for non-Hispanic black women, almost four times as high.ⁱⁱⁱ This trend also intersects with the opioid epidemic. In a growing number of states, suicide and overdose are the leading causes of maternal mortality.^{iv,v}

Congress has an opportunity to address this trend by investing in maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) – interdisciplinary groups of local experts in maternal, infant, and public health – to examine maternal death cases and identify locally relevant ways to prevent future deaths.

H.R. 1318 supports state MMRCs, and promotes national information sharing through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), so that states can continue to learn from best practices and collaborate as needed. This bill will also put data to work through demonstration projects to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing rising rates of maternal mortality in the United States. We look forward to working closely with you toward the enactment of H.R. 1318.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association

Cc: The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable Frank Pallone
The Honorable Michael Burgess, MD, FACOG
The Honorable Gene Green

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- ⁱ Murray JL, Wang H, Kassebaum N. Sharp Decline in Maternal and Child Deaths Globally, New Data Show. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. University of Washington. 2016.
- ⁱⁱ MacDorman M, Declercq E, Cabral H, Morton C. Is the United States Maternal Mortality Rate Increasing? Disentangling trends from measurement issues: Short title: U.S. Maternal Mortality Trends. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2016 Sep; 128(3): 447-455.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pms.html>
- ^{iv} Report from Maternal Mortality Review Committees: A View into Their Critical Role. CDC Foundation. February 2017. Available at: <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/sites/default/files/upload/pdf/MMRIAREport.pdf>
- ^v Metz TD, Rovner P, Hoffman MC, Allshouse AA, Beckwith KM, Binswanger IA. Maternal Deaths from Suicide and Overdose in Colorado, 2004-2012. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2016 Dec; 128(6): 1233-1240.