

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chairwoman Murray, Chairwoman Granger, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As the second session of the 118th Congress begins, the 152 undersigned organizations—representing a broad range of health care stakeholder organizations – write to express our overwhelming support for efforts to include the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3226/S. 1573) and the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3838/S. 2415) in the final FY 2024 appropriations package or as part of any other must pass legislative package. These critical bills will reauthorize essential maternal and infant health programs and research at a time when maternal and infant death rates, especially in communities of color, have increased dramatically.

Thanks to the support of bipartisan Members of Congress, critical maternal health legislation was enacted over the last Congress. However, our ongoing work to improve maternal and infant health is more important than ever as our nation is in the midst of a dire maternal and infant health crisis. In 2021, preterm birth rates rose to a 15-year high, the maternal mortality rate continued to rise making the U.S. one of the most dangerous places to give birth in the developed world, and there are unacceptable disparities in birth outcomes. In fact, a recent report from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center for Vital Statistics showed that infant mortality increased by 3% in 2022, marking the first time in more

than two decades the U.S. has seen a year-over-year increase in infant deaths.¹ As a nation, we can and must do better at preventing avoidable maternal and infant deaths.

We collectively look forward to continue working with Congress to address this crisis through bipartisan policies focused on increasing access to quality and equitable health care, supporting healthy moms and babies, and improving research and surveillance. Two pieces of legislation that will be key to doing this are the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3226/S. 1573) and the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3838/S. 2415). Both bills have received strong bipartisan support. The PREEMIE Act was unanimously approved by the House Energy & Commerce Committee, passed by the full House of Representatives by voice vote, and was approved by the Senate HELP Committee by voice. The Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act was unanimously approved by House Energy & Commerce Committee and reported favorably by a voice vote in the Senate HELP Committee, and is awaiting a vote on the House suspension calendar.

The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3226/S. 1573) represents the federal government's commitment to preventing preterm birth and its consequences, a leading contributor to infant death. The U.S. has a D+ grade in the March of Dimes Report Card, with a 10.5% preterm birth rate – approximately 383,000 preterm births.² Preterm-related causes account for 35.8% of infant deaths, and preterm babies may suffer long-term impacts such as birth defects, intellectual and developmental delays, behavioral problems, neurological disorders, visual and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, and respiratory or intestinal insufficiency. Not including the loss of thousands of lives, the annual societal economic cost (medical, education, and lost productivity) is an estimated \$25.2B.

The Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3838/S. 2415) would strengthen and expand federal support for Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs). MMRCs are tasked with identifying maternal deaths, analyzing factors that contributed to those deaths, and translating the lessons into policy changes. The U.S. has one of the highest maternal mortality and morbidity rates in the developed world, with nearly 900 women dying due to pregnancy-related causes in 2020. Passage of this legislation would help provide ongoing support of MMRCs and better protect birthing people throughout their pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, and assist in narrowing racial disparities in outcomes.

We ask that you include these bipartisan maternal and infant health bills in the final FY 2024 package or other must-pass legislation this Congress. Lastly, we express our support for strong, sustained investments in our country's maternal and infant health programs, including newborn screening, research and surveillance, maternal mental health, and prevention programs in the FY 2024 budget. Without understanding the root causes and best practices associated with strong, healthy moms and babies, it will be even more difficult to reverse these staggering, deadly outcomes.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr033.pdf>

² <https://www.marchofdimes.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/MarchofDimesReportCard-UnitedStates.pdf>

Thank you for your support of moms and babies. If we can provide further information or otherwise be of assistance, please contact KJ Hertz, Senior Director, Federal Affairs at March of Dimes (khertz@marchofdimes.org, 571-969-8655).

Sincerely,

AdvaMed
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation Chicago
Alliance of Community Health Plans
Alpha Phi Sigma Chapter Pretty Poodles
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association on Health and Disability
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Urogynecologic Society
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Arnold Solutions 53, Incorporated
Association of Black Cardiologists
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Barnes Health Affiliates, LLC
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Blue Skies Consultation
Bluestone Counseling Group, PLLC
Bobbie
Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network
California Chapter of Postpartum Support International
California Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Calming Nature Doula Service & Center
CARES Foundation Inc.
Catholic Health Association of the United States
CDH International

Centering Healthcare Institute
Cerebral Palsy Foundation
Child Neurology Foundation
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Hospital Association
CINQCARE
Coalition on Human Needs
COCOLIFE FOUNDATION
Concord Therapy
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S.
Provinces
Divine Living
dsm firmenich North America
Educare Learning Network
Endocrine Society
Endometriosis Association
Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center
Etana Tax and Accounting LLC
Families USA
Family Health Initiatives
Family Voices
Family Voices NJ
First Candle
First Focus Campaign for Children
Flora, Femme, & Fauna
Futures Without Violence
Galactosemia Foundation
GAPPS
Genetic Alliance
Global Down Syndrome Foundation
Gold Coast Doulas
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
Handful of Pearls Birthing Services, LLC
Health Equity Solutions
Healthy Birth Day, Inc.
HealthyWomen
HIMSS
ICEA
Impetus - Let's Get Started LLC
International Childbirth Education Association - ICEA
Ipas
Jericho Road Community Health Center
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Kaleida Health Family Planning

Lakeshore Foundation
Legacy Community Health
LLL Alliance For Breastfeeding Education
Mama Glow
Mamatoto Village
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health
Maternal Applications of Technology for Community Health (MATCH)
Coalition
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Maternal Mental Health NOW
Mental Health America
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Mom Congress
MTS Sickle Cell Foundation, Inc.
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National CMV Foundation
National Council on Family Relations
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Society
Nemours Children's Health
NICU Parent Network
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and
Nutrition
NX Prenatal Inc.
Organic Acidemia Association
Partners In Health
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association
Philips North America
Postpartum Support International Nebraska Chapter
Preeclampsia Foundation
PremieWorld Foundation Inc.
Prevent Blindness
PSI Florida
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
PUSH for Empowered Pregnancy

Reproductive Health Impact
RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association
Rhia Ventures
Save Section 9
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Lambda Epsilon Chapter
Small Steps Giant Sleeps
Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Reproductive Investigation
Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
Spina Bifida Association
STChealth
SWCyril Holdings Inc
Symonette Strategies & Solutions, LLC
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
The Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness
The Collaborative
The Fibroid Foundation
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-Violence
The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
The Tatia Oden French Memorial Foundation
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity (URGE)
United MSD Foundation
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
Womb Wisdom Wellness LLC
Zero to Three