

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 118<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> <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