



August 29, 2018

The Honorable Robin Kelly
United States House of Representatives
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kelly:

On behalf of the March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, I would like to express our support for H.R. 5977, the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA) Act.

Tragically, the United States fares worse than the vast majority of developed nations in preventing pregnancy-related deaths. In the U.S., an estimated 700 women die each year from pregnancy-related or associated complications and an additional 50,000 suffer from severe maternal morbidity. Black women are three to four times more likely to die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth such as preeclampsia/eclampsia, obstetric hemorrhage, infection, and suicide and drug overdose, compared to white women. This racial disparity in maternal mortality has both persisted and widened over time. However, estimates of national levels of maternal mortality are inconclusive as the U.S. has not been able to submit a formal maternal mortality rate to international data repositories since 2007. Studies estimate that approximately 60 percent of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable and over half of maternal injuries could be reduced or eliminated with better care and enhanced maternal mortality informatics. The current system fails to address the vast medical and social determinant factors that contribute to such high maternal mortality rates within the U.S. compared to other high-income countries.

H.R. 5977, MOMMA's Act, would address this issue by taking a multi-pronged approach to curbing maternal mortality and identifying effective interventions. The Act would increase attention and resources toward standardizing maternal mortality and morbidity data and enforcing consistency in data collection, management, and dissemination across states. Additional funding would be appropriated toward the establishment and administration of national emergency obstetric protocols and best practices to save mothers' lives. The Act would also permit states to expand coverage under Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program through the full post-partum period for women who have given birth and ensure improved access to culturally-competent care training and workforce practices throughout the care delivery system.

The March of Dimes is proud to support H.R. 5977, and we look forward to working with you to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and families. If we can provide more information, please contact Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Government Affairs Cynthia Pellegrini at cpellegrini@marchofdimes.org or 202/659-1800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey D. Stewart'.

Stacey D. Stewart
President