



August 29, 2018

The Honorable Kamala Harris
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

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 S. 3363, the Maternal Care Access and Reducing Emergencies (CARE) 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. 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 quality improvement and safety initiatives in hospitals. In particular, programs are needed to address disparities, structural barriers to care, differential care experienced by women of color, and provider implicit racial bias.

S. 3363, the Maternal CARE Act, would address these issues by creating two new grant programs focused on reducing racial health disparities in maternal health. The first would provide \$5 million directed to medical schools and other health professionals training programs to support implicit bias training, with a priority on obstetrics and gynecology programs. The second would direct \$25 million to states for the purpose of establishing or operating pregnancy medical home programs to deliver integrated health care services to pregnant women and new mothers as well as reduce adverse maternal health outcomes, maternal deaths, and racial health disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity. The bill would also instruct the National Academy of Medicine to study and make recommendations for incorporating bias recognition in clinical skills testing for U.S. medical schools.

The March of Dimes is proud to support S. 3363, 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