



OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

T (202) 659-1800
E advocacy@marchofdimes.org
MARCHOFDIMES.ORG

October 16, 2018

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
US Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

On behalf of 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 write to share our support for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Modernization of Services Act, or the Rural MOMS Act. We appreciate your commitment to ensuring pregnant women have access to appropriate, and often lifesaving, health care no matter where they reside.

The Rural MOMS Act seeks to address the significant disparities in access to maternity care that women in rural areas experience. According to a new report by March of Dimes, more than 5 million women in the United States live in a maternity care desert, a county that has no hospital offering obstetric care and no obstetric providers. Of those women, approximately 80 percent live in rural areas. These women face significant barriers to obtaining vital health care services before, during and after delivery. Almost 150,000 babies are born to women living in maternity care deserts each year.

The Rural MOMS Act would significantly increase the federal government's investment in programs to help women living in remote areas connect with maternal and obstetric care, improve obstetric care at rural health care facilities, expand obstetric telehealth resources and ensure that rural maternity care in rural areas is a focus of activities across the Department of Health and Human Services. March of Dimes strongly supports the goals of the Rural MOMS Act and endorses this important legislation.

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you to promote the passage of the Rural MOMS Act. For additional information, please contact Rebecca Abbott, Deputy Director of Federal Affairs for Public Health, at rabbott@marchofdimes.org or (202) 659-1800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Cynthia Pellegrini'.

Cynthia Pellegrini
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs