

March of Dimes Foundation

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November 30, 2017

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
U.S. House of Representatives
439 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

marchofdimes.org
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Dear Representative Bonamici:

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 am pleased to express our support for H.R. 4418, the Enhancing Questions to Understand Intentions for Pregnancy (EQUIP) Act of 2017. This legislation is an important step toward ensuring women have the information and resources they need to have healthy pregnancies and healthy infants.

The March of Dimes works to reduce preterm birth and other adverse birth outcomes by promoting interventions that improve maternal and child health, including appropriate birth spacing. Evidence indicates that waiting at least 18 months between a child's birth and the next pregnancy can significantly reduce the risk of poor birth outcomes such as preterm birth and low birthweight. Access to appropriate family planning counseling and contraception plays a key role in birth spacing and reducing risk for adverse birth outcomes.

The EQUIP Act would establish a demonstration program to facilitate the integration of pregnancy intention screening into clinical practice, where primary health care providers would be trained to ask women routinely about their reproductive health wishes and needs. Encouraging health care providers to ask patients about their plans to become pregnant can prompt an important conversation about appropriate birth spacing and help ensure women planning to become pregnant initiate important lifestyle changes, including quitting smoking, losing weight and increasing folic acid consumption.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. The March of Dimes looks forward to working with you to promote the passage of the EQUIP Act of 2017 and improving maternal and infant health. For additional information, please contact Rebecca Abbott, Deputy Director of Federal Affairs, at rabbott@marchofdimes.org or (202) 659-1800.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Pellegrini
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs