

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY2022) Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$100 million for the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network (SET-NET) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding would enable SET-NET to scale nationally and serve as the nationwide preparedness and response network the United States needs to protect pregnant individuals and infants from emerging public health threats.

The United States continues to grapple with ongoing public health emergencies that put our most vulnerable populations, including pregnant individuals and infants, at risk. SET-NET is an innovative data collection system that links maternal exposures during pregnancy to health outcomes for babies. Building on a mom-baby linked data collection approach developed in response to the Zika outbreak, SET-NET leverages existing data sources to enable CDC and health departments to detect the impact of new and emerging health threats on pregnant individuals and their babies. Findings from SET-NET help families, health care providers, public health professionals, and policymakers take action to save lives, reduce risk, and improve the health of pregnant individuals and infants.

In Fiscal Year 2021, SET-NET provided support to 29 state, local, and territorial health departments to monitor the impact on pregnant individuals and their babies of exposure to Zika, syphilis, hepatitis C, or COVID-19. With sufficient funding, SET-NET could expand to support 64 state, local, and territorial health departments as they collect, analyze, and report data on existing and emerging threats to pregnant individuals and their babies, including COVID-19 and environmental hazards such as lead or perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The public health data infrastructure and surveillance systems established under SET-NET has enabled rapid data collection on the health impact of COVID-19 on pregnant individuals and

their babies throughout the pandemic. This data continues to inform clinical guidance from CDC for pregnant women and infants. The latest findings from SET-NET data show that pregnant people with COVID-19 may be at increased risk of having a preterm infant compared to pregnant people without COVID-19. Moving forward, it is critical that Congress continue to invest in SET-NET entities to support rapid data collection and inform unanswered questions about the impact of COVID-19 during pregnancy.

Investing in this sustainable framework for rapid, evidence-based data collection will ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the unique needs of pregnant individuals and infants including during public health emergencies. Thank you for your consideration of this request to provide \$100 million for SET-NET in Fiscal Year 2022 to fully fund out a national preparedness and response network focused on pregnant individuals and infants.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator