

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman, Senate Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, House Committee on Energy
and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Catherine McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy
and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, Chairwoman Pallone, and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

We, the 110+ undersigned organizations who represent and care for the health and wellness of mothers and babies in our country, are writing to urge the inclusion of three separate pieces of maternal mental health (MMH) legislation within the upcoming mental health packages to address MMH and substance use disorders (SUD) impacting individuals during pregnancy and first year following childbirth.

Tragically, *suicide and overdose combined are the leading cause of death* for new mothers.^{1,2} MMH disorders are the *most common complications* of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 pregnant women or new mothers, or 800,000 American families each year.^{3,4,5} However, only 25% of those impacted are identified and receive any treatment.⁶ Women who face racial or economic inequities experience MMH conditions at 2-3 times the rate of white or higher-income individuals, but are less likely to be identified or receive treatment.^{7,8} Untreated MMH disorders can have long-term negative impact on parent, baby, family, and society.^{9,10,11,12} The cost of not treating MMH disorders is \$32,000 per mother/infant dyad, or \$14 billion each year in addressing poor health outcomes of mother and baby, lost wages, and lowered productivity.¹³ The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a three-fold increase in the number of women and childbearing individuals experiencing anxiety and depression during and following pregnancy.¹⁴

As you consider legislation to include in upcoming mental health packages, we urge you to include three bipartisan bills to address the gaps in MMH systems and care at the national, state, and local levels:

¹ Trost WL, et al. Preventing pregnancy-related mental health deaths: Insights from 14 US Maternal Mortality Review Committees, 2008-17. *Health Affairs*, 2021;40(10):1551-1559.

² California Pregnancy-Related Maternal Mortality Review. CA-PMR Report: Pregnancy-Associated Suicide, 2002-2012. 2019.

³ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. ACOG committee opinion no. 757: Screening for perinatal depression. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2018;132(5):208-12.

⁴ Fawcett EJ, et al. The prevalence of anxiety disorders during pregnancy and the postpartum period: A multivariate Bayesian meta-analysis. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2019;80(4):18r12527.

⁵ Gavin NI, et al. Perinatal depression: A systematic review of prevalence and incidence. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2005;106(5):1071-83.

⁶ Byatt N, et al. Enhancing participation in depression care in outpatient perinatal care settings: A systematic review. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2015;126(5):619-625.

⁷ Taylor, J and Quamble CM. Suffering in silence: Mood disorders among pregnant and postpartum women of color. Center for American Progress, November 2019. Available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/suffering-in-silence/>.

⁸ Howell, E, et al. Racial and ethnic differences in factors associated with early postpartum depressive symptoms. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2005;105(6):1442-50.

⁹ Zhou J, et al. Treatment of substance use disorders among women of reproductive age by depression and anxiety disorder status, 2008-2014. *Journal of Women's Health*, 2019; 28(8):1068-1076.

¹⁰ Field T. Postpartum depression effects on early interactions, parenting, and safety practices: A review. *Infant Behavioral Health*, 2010; 33(1):1-14.

¹¹ Sriraman NK, et al. Postpartum depression: What do pediatricians need to know? *Pediatrics in Review*, 2017; 38(12): 541-551.

¹² Cherry AS, et al. The contribution of maternal psychological functioning to infant length of stay in the neonatal intensive care unit. *International Journal of Women's Health*, 2016; 8:233-242.

¹³ Luca DL, et al. Financial toll of untreated perinatal mood and anxiety disorders among 2017 births in the United States. *Am J Public Health*, 2020;110(6):888-96.

¹⁴ Lebel C., et al. Elevated depression and anxiety symptoms among pregnant individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 2020; 277:5-13.

- I. **TRIUMPH for New Moms Act (S. 2779 / H.R. 4217).** Currently there are no Federal Commissions, Coordinating Committees, or Task Forces that address, coordinate, or create a national strategy for maternal mental health, leaving missed cost-saving opportunities to address these disorders. This bipartisan, no cost legislation will close the gaps in current federal MMH coordination by establishing a Task Force to develop a national strategy and recommendations to Governors. This will align federal and state actors on how to utilize existing programs, eliminate duplication, and identify opportunities to integrate MMH into existing federal programs.

- II. **Into the Light for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Act (S. 3824 / H.R. 7073).** This legislation is designed to ensure mothers continue being screened and treated by their health care providers and have mental health support in between these visits. Into the Light will reauthorize and expand Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grants to states to create and maintain programs to address MMH and SUD, and maintain the dedicated 24/7/365 MMH hotline.

- III. **Moms Matter Act (S. 484 / H.R. 909).** This legislation will address the unique MMH needs of racially and ethnically diverse mothers by expanding prevention, collaborative care, and access to treatment. It will also support mothers in these communities by increasing and diversifying the workforce and investing in community-based programs.

We urge you to include these three bipartisan bills within the upcoming mental health packages to help ensure that mothers will have access to the mental health care that they – and their babies – need to thrive.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom	Beyond the Baby Blues
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance	Center for Postpartum Health
Shades of Blue Project	Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
&Mother	Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work	EmmaWell
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists	Every Mother Counts
American Counseling Association	Families USA
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	Florida State University
American Psychiatric Association	Forward Wellness Counseling and Consulting, LLC
Arbit Counseling	Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law	Great Lakes Perinatal Wellness
Bethesda Women's Mental Health	Hand to Hold

Happiest Baby, Inc.	Meadowlark Psychiatric Services
Healthy Expectations Perinatal Mental Health Program, Colorado	Mental Health America
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, The Montana Coalition, Inc.	Mental Health America of Ohio
HealthyWomen	Mission: Motherhood
Hope for HIE	Mom Congress
Icahn School of Medicine at Mt Sinai	MomsRising
Inseparable	Motherhood Center
Integrative Therapy of Greater Washington	National Alliance on Mental Illness
International OCD Foundation	National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses	National Association of Psycho-Social Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Jed Foundation	National Association of Social Workers
Kennedy Forum	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
LA Best Babies Network	National Birth Equity Collaborative
Lamaze International	National Eating Disorders Alliance
Legal Action Center	National Federation of Families
Lifeline for Families Center and Lifeline for Moms Program at UMass Chan Medical School	National Partnership for Women & Families
Lifeline for Moms	No Health without Mental Health
Marce of North American Perinatal Mental Health Society (MONA)	North American Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics & Gynecology
March for Moms	Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine
March of Dimes	Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine
Massachusetts General Court	PACE
Massachusetts Postpartum Depression Fund	Perinatal Support Washington
Maternal Health Advocate	Periscope Project
Maternal Mental Health NOW	Postpartum Resource Center of New York

Postpartum Support International - Alaska Chapter	University of Illinois at Chicago
Postpartum Support International - California Chapter	University of Minnesota
Postpartum Support International - Colorado Chapter	University of Missouri
Postpartum Support International - Delaware Chapter	University of Missouri School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry
Postpartum Support International - Illinois Chapter	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Postpartum Support International - North Carolina Chapter	University of New Mexico
Postpartum Support International - Oregon Chapter	University of Pennsylvania
Postpartum Support International (PSI)	University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry
Psychotherapy Action Network	University of Washington
RAISE Consulting	Vermont Center for Children, Youth and Families
Repro Psych Trainees	Virginia Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives
Return to Zero: HOPE	Waverly Health Center Behavioral Health Department
RI International, Inc.	Werk it Moms LLC
Seven Starling	Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island
Shoshana Center for Repro Health Psychology PLLC	Women's Wellbeing Program, University of Minnesota MHealth Fairview, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health
Society for Women's Health Research	Yale School of Public Health
Source Psychotherapy	Zero to Three
Star Legacy Foundation	
Susan Benjamin Feingold PsyD and Associates LLC	
The Colette Louise Tisdahl Foundation	
The Ohio State University	
UCONN Health	