

Maternal Health Accountability Act (S. 1112)

Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) and Senator Capito (R-WV)

Purpose: S. 1112 would foster a shared responsibility between the states and the federal government to improve quality of maternal care while educating and informing health care institutions and professionals along with women and families about preventing pregnancy-related deaths.

Background: The United States is ranked 50th globally for its maternal mortality rate, and is one of eight countries in which maternal mortality has been on the rise. Recent studies show the mortality rate has increased by approximately 26.6% from 2000 to 2014. The most severe complications of pregnancy affect more than 65,000 women each year in the United States. Additional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that black women are three times more likely to die from complications of pregnancy or childbirth than white woman.

Eighteen states still do not have a maternal morbidity and mortality review system to utilize data to reduce maternal deaths and injuries.

Solution: S. 1112 would create a grant program for states and federally recognized Indian tribes to establish and sustain a maternal mortality review committee, made up of health care and maternal health professionals, to review deaths and injuries that occur to women as a result of a pregnancy or childbirth. This information would also be open to the public. Maternal mortality boards would then review the data they have collected and identify trends and patterns, so they can begin to address disparities in adverse outcomes.

Supporters: Over 30 organizations have voiced their support of S. 1112, including:

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

American Psychological Association

American College of Nurse Midwives

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

Every Mother Counts

March of Dimes

MomsRising

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)

National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health

PerkinElmer, Inc.

Preeclampsia Foundation

Women's Heart Alliance

Cosponsor the Bipartisan Preventing Maternal Deaths Act

Supported by: American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Preeclampsia Foundation, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine and the March of Dimes

Dear Colleague:

In September 2016, a *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* study highlighted an alarming trend –unlike in any other industrialized country, maternal deaths in the United States are on the rise. The maternal mortality rate — maternal deaths per 100,000 live births — increased to 35.8 in 2014 from 17.7 in 2000. The United States is ranked 47th globally for its maternal mortality rate.

I invite you to join me as a cosponsor of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act. This legislation would help states establish or support Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs) to examine pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths and identify ways to reduce these tragic incidents. It will also improve data collection and address disparities in maternal health outcomes. This bill will also help states save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period. It will also help identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers.

Pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths are caused by a variety of factors, from complications like preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and obstetric hemorrhage, to emerging challenges such as suicide and overdose due to substance use disorder. In order to understand what is driving these tragic incidents and to help save lives, Congress should support state MMRCs that collect standardized data, and recommend public health solutions that fit their local community.

In addition, disparities in maternal health care also have not improved in more than 20 years. African American women are three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women. In 2011, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic white women was 12.5 deaths per 100,000 births compared with 42.8 deaths per 100,000 births for non-Hispanic black women.

Please join me in supporting local solutions to this national problem. To cosponsor this legislation, or if you have any questions, please contact Jessica Wixson in Rep. Herrera Beutler's office (Jessica.Wixson@mail.house.gov) or Yvesner Zamar in Rep. Conyer's office (Yvesner.Zamar@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello
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