

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,

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| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| 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 | |