



October 26, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned represent members and partners of the Equitable Maternal Health Coalition, a diverse coalition comprised of over 45 organizations that represent healthcare providers, public health professionals, researchers, community-based organizations, non-profits, health insurance providers, hospitals, maternal and infant health advocates, and other key stakeholders committed to eliminating maternal health inequities that disproportionately affect Black and Indigenous birthing people. We are writing to show our support and gratitude for your inclusion of critical investments in the House of Representatives' proposed Build Back Better package that clearly demonstrate a commitment to health and racial equity for all birthing people and their families. We respectfully ask that you stay the course to ensure passage of an uncompromised final reconciliation bill that includes all key maternal health provisions funded at House levels.

Collectively we would like to show our support for the following investments:

- **Medicaid coverage for one full year postpartum:** We appreciate that the House Build Back Better Act includes a mandatory, permanent extension of Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one full year postpartum. Every American who experiences pregnancy deserves health insurance coverage that gives them access to safe, respectful, high-quality care for at least 12 months postpartum, regardless of the type of coverage they have. Medicaid is a primary payer of maternity care in the U.S., covering 43 percent of births nationwide¹, yet pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage typically ends roughly 60 days after delivery. One in three women experience a disruption in insurance coverage before, during, or after pregnancy, and close to 60 percent of these disruptions include a period without coverage.² The year following the end of pregnancy

¹ Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission. Medicaid's Role in Financing Maternity Care. January 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Medicaid%E2%80%99s-Role-in-Financing-Maternity-Care.pdf>.

² "High Rates of Perinatal Insurance Churn Persist After the ACA," Health Affairs Blog, September 16, 2019. DOI: 10.1377/hblog20190913.387157.

can be full of health challenges for new mothers, and these challenges are often unaddressed.^{3,4} Many maternal mortality review committees have found that nearly one of every three pregnancy-related deaths occur between seven days to one year following childbirth, and even more of those deaths occur between six weeks and 12 months postpartum.⁵ Deaths from heart conditions and other preventable causes, including overdose and suicide, occur more frequently during this 12-month postpartum period.^{6,7} Closing this critical gap in coverage during this vulnerable time can mean the difference between life and death for many mothers. This is a matter of health equity as well, as nearly half of all Black women experienced gaps in coverage sometime between the time before pregnancy and the year after a pregnancy ended.⁸

- **Centering racial equity in maternal health services through the Black Maternal Health Momnibus:** We applaud the House for signaling their commitment to a deep investment in maternal health by including provisions of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus in the Build Back Better Act. The United States is the only developed nation with a rising maternal mortality rate, with 60% of these maternal deaths deemed as preventable by the CDC. The maternal health crisis in this country has glaring racial and ethnic disparities particularly for Black women and birthing people. Black birthing people are dying at 2 to 3 times the rate of their white counterparts across income and education statuses. The Momnibus Act includes comprehensive policy solutions that address a number of factors that are responsible for the Black maternal health crisis, including issues of systemic racism and social risk factors like housing, transportation and environmental risks. By advancing the Momnibus, Congress will make historic investments in high quality, culturally appropriate maternity care and robust social support. The Momnibus will save moms' lives, end disparities, & advance birth justice for all.

Thank you for your commitment to improving Black maternal health by taking the necessary steps to achieve a more equitable and respectful maternity care system. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that all birthing people and their families can thrive.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
American Academy of Family Physicians

³ Spelke B and Werner E. The Fourth Trimester of Pregnancy: Committing to Maternal Health and Well-Being Postpartum. *R I Med J* (2013). 2018 Oct 1;101(8):30-33.

⁴ Tully KP, Stuebe AM, and Verbiest SB. The fourth trimester: a critical transition period with unmet maternal health needs. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2017 Jul;217(1):37-41.

⁵ Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States. Petersen EE, Davis NL, Goodman D, et al., 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention, 13 States, 2013–2017. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2019;68:423–429. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6818e1>.

⁶ Pregnancy and heart disease. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 212. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2019;133:e320–56.

⁷ For Addicted Women, the Year After Childbirth Is the Deadliest. Vestal, Christine. (2018, August 14) Pew Stateline. Retrieved from <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/08/14/for-addicted-women-the-year-after-childbirth-isthe-deadliest>.

⁸ Daw JR, Kolenic GE, Dalton VK, Zivin K, Winkelmann T, Kozhimannil KB, Admon LK. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Perinatal Insurance Coverage. *Obstet Gynecol* 2020;135(4):917-924.

American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Ancient Song Doula Services
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Boston University Center of Excellence in MCH
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for American Progress
Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project
Families USA
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia
Ingram Screening, LLC
Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation
Mamatoto Village
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Mom and Baby Action Network
MomsRising
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Partnership for Women & Families
Nurse-Family Partnership
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Postpartum Support International
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Tara Hansen Foundation
The 2 Degrees Foundation
The Joint Commission