



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

December 6, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I urge you to include several provisions in year-end legislation to advance maternal health and address the health disparities faced by mothers of color.

Providing compassionate care for mothers and babies has long been an integral part of the founding ministries of Catholic health care, made up of women religious who were pioneers in the communities they served. CHA's current members also have affirmed their strong commitment to reducing health disparities and promoting health equity through our national campaign, *We Are Called*. Catholic health care is guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, including the inherent dignity of each person; the common good; and concern for poor and vulnerable. These values call us to work to eradicate racial and ethnic disparities in access to quality health care and health outcomes, which stand in direct opposition to the mission of Catholic health care and our social tradition. The imperative to identify and eliminate racial and health disparities as a key component of quality maternal health continues to increase in urgency.

Specifically, we ask that Congress permanently make 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage a nationwide policy to address maternal mortality and improve the health and well-being of mothers, babies, and children. Congress must also authorize and fund maternal health programs that improve telehealth; manage behavioral health needs; promote cultural competency; fix gaps in the perinatal work force; address the social determinants of health including the risks of climate change; and bolster the collection of data and programs of federal agencies like the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH). Including these key provisions in year-end legislation is a necessary federal counterpart to our work at the community level.

As Catholic health care providers, we are committed to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity, and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health care. We urge you to include these important maternal health equity priorities as Congress finishes their work this year and thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M".

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO