

May 16, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman, House Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee,  
Committee on Defense  
117 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee,  
Subcommittee on Defense  
117 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chairman Tester, and Ranking Member Shelby:

We, the 114 undersigned organizations who represent and care for the health and wellness of mothers and babies in our country, are writing to request funding and provisions to address maternal mental health (MMH) as the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress considers the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget.

Tragically, ***suicide and overdose combined are the leading cause of death*** for new mothers.<sup>1,2</sup> 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.<sup>3,4,5</sup> However, only 25% of those impacted are identified and receive any treatment.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7,8</sup> Untreated MMH disorders can have long-term negative impact on parent, baby, family, and society.<sup>9,10,11,12</sup> The cost of not treating MMH disorders is \$32,000 per mother/infant dyad, or \$14 billion

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. ACOG committee opinion no. 757: Screening for perinatal depression. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2018;132(5):e208-12.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>7</sup> 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/>.

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

<sup>9</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>12</sup> 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.

each year in addressing poor health outcomes of mother and baby, lost wages, and lowered productivity.<sup>13</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a three-fold increase in the number of women and childbearing individuals experiencing MMH disorders.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, we write to request increased funding for three specific programs to increase research and provide support and treatment to those experiencing MMH conditions

- 1. HRSA grants to states.** HRSA’s Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavior Disorders Program provides grants to states to address MMH conditions. Thirty states and territories applied for funding when the program was announced, but budget limitations resulted in just seven states receiving grants. These states have created programs that provide both expand the workforce to address MMH conditions and provide critically-needed and cost-effective services to pregnant women and new mothers. We thank the Committees for including an additional \$1.5 million increase in funding for FY2022 Appropriations but recognize this will not meet states’ needs. *We request an additional \$5 million in FY2023 funding to provide grants to five additional states and technical assistance to non-grantee states.*
- 2. MMH Hotline.** The MMH hotline, created through the FY2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act, provides 24/7/365 voice and text services in both English and Spanish for individuals experiencing MMH disorders and those who love and care for them. Staff for the MMH hotline include licensed and certified healthcare or mental health providers, along with certified peer specialists. We thank the Committees for the \$1 million increase in FY 2022 Appropriations which was needed to build out the hotline’s basic services. *We request an additional \$2 million in FY2023 funding for the MMH hotline to increase public awareness, expand services to include maternal substance use disorder support, and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care.*
- 3. DoD’s Peer Reviewed Medical Research Programs – Maternal Mental Health Research.** Members of the Armed Services and their spouses are more likely to experience MMH disorders than their civilian counterparts; however, there are significant gaps in research on why and how to best prevent, intervene, and treat these vulnerable populations. *We request that the FY2023 Senate Defense Appropriations package include “maternal mental health” as a topic area for research under the DoD’s Peer Review Medical Research Program.*

Increased resources for these three programs will help ensure that mothers will have access to the mental health support and care that they – and their babies – need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
&Mother  
2020 Mom

American Association of Psychoanalysis in  
Clinical Social Work  
  
American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists

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<sup>13</sup> 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.  
<sup>14</sup> 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.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Arbit Counseling  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Bethesda Women's Mental Health Center  
Beyond the Baby Blues  
Center for Postpartum Health  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Colette Louise Tisdahl Foundation  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Cornerstone Montgomery  
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center  
EmmaWell  
Every Mother Counts  
Families USA  
Florida State University  
Forward Wellness Counseling and Consulting LLC  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Great Lakes Perinatal Wellness  
Hand to Hold  
Happiest Baby, Inc.  
Healthy Expectation Perinatal Mental Health Program, Colorado  
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, The Montana Coalition, Inc.  
HealthyWomen  
Hope for HIE  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mt Sinai  
Inseparable  
Integrative Therapy of Greater Washington  
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses  
Ivy Counseling & Wellness Services LLC  
Jed Foundation  
LA Best Babies Network  
Lamaze International  
Legal Action Center  
Lifeline for Families Center and Lifeline for Moms Program at UMass Chan Medical School  
Lifeline for Moms  
Marce of North American Perinatal Mental Health Society (MONA)  
March for Moms  
March of Dimes

Massachusetts General Court	Periscope Project
Massachusetts Postpartum Depression Fund	Postpartum Resource Center of New York
Maternal Mental Health NOW	Postpartum Support Center
Meadowlark Counseling	Postpartum Support International
Mental Health America	Postpartum Support International - Alaska Chapter
Mental Health America of Ohio	Postpartum Support International - California Chapter
Mission: Motherhood	Postpartum Support International - Colorado Chapter
Mom Congress	Postpartum Support International - Delaware Chapter
MomsRising	Postpartum Support International - Illinois Chapter
Motherhood Center	Postpartum Support International - Oregon Chapter
National Association for Rural Mental Health	RAISE Consulting
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health	Repro Psych Trainees
National Association of Social Workers	Return to Zero: HOPE
National Association of State Mental Health Directors	Rhode Island Maternal Psychiatry Resource Network Program
National Birth Equity Collaborative	RI International, Inc.
National Council for Mental Wellbeing	Seven Starling
National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)	Shades Of Blue Project
National Partnership for Women & Families	Shoshana Center for Reproductive Health Psychology PLLC
North American Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics & Gynecology	Society for Women's Health Research
Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine	Source Psychotherapy
PACE	
Perigee Fund	
Perinatal Support Washington	

Susan Benjamin Feingold PsyD and Associates  
LLC

Yale School of Public Health

Swope Health Services OBGYN

Zero to Three

The Ohio State University

UCONN Health

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

University of Minnesota

University of Missouri - Columbia

University of Missouri School of Medicine,  
Department of Psychiatry

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

University of New Mexico

University of Pennsylvania

University of Pittsburgh Department of  
Psychiatry

University of Washington

Vermont Center for Children, Youth and  
Families at the University of Vermont Medical  
Center

Virginia Affiliate of the American College of  
Nurse-Midwives

Waverly Health Center Behavioral Health  
Department

Werk it Moms LLC

Women's Wellbeing Program, University of  
Minnesota MHealth Fairview, Department of  
Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

Women's Psychiatry Baltimore