

October 30, 2018

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
U.S. Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support S. 1112, the Maternal Health Accountability Act of 2017, as amended and passed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on July 9, 2018. Your legislation is an important part of efforts to reduce maternal mortality in the United States.

Since the implementation of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System, the number of reported pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. increased from 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 18.0 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2014. The causes for the increase in maternal mortality are complex, including a lack of consistent access to prenatal care and persistent inequities in care. As hospitals take on a greater role in improving health outcomes across the continuum of care, it is important to redouble our efforts and commit to continuing improvements in maternal safety, while also enhancing data collection and analysis to support such efforts.

The Maternal Health Accountability Act provides federal funding for state efforts to develop maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) in order to better understand maternal complications and, ultimately, identify solutions that will improve health care quality and outcomes for mothers. While some states and cities already have established MMRCs, having participation by all states will allow for the collection of additional data that could result in greater understanding of the causes of maternal mortality and ways to improve treatment.



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Page 2 of 2

We thank you for your attention to this important issue and look forward to working with you to enact S. 1112.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President