

May 2, 2019

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinical 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) writes in support of provisions of your legislation, S. 916, the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA's) Act.

Maternal health is a top priority for the AHA and our member hospitals and health systems. The causes for the escalating rates of maternal mortality are complex, including a lack of consistent access to comprehensive care and persistent racial disparities in health and health care. As hospitals work to improve health outcomes across the continuum of care, we are redoubling our efforts to combat maternal mortality and morbidity.

The AHA supports the following provisions of S. 916:

- **Improving Data Collection.** The bill would establish federal initiatives to assist states with reporting comprehensive data on maternal mortality to encourage uniformity in reporting and data sharing among states.
- **Disseminating best practices.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would provide information to state maternal and mortality review committees, and the Health Resources and Services Administration would provide information to hospitals, professional societies and perinatal collaboratives regarding how to prevent maternal mortality.
- **Funding for an Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) grant program.** We agree that promoting the widespread adoption of maternal safety



bundles at the state level would help improve maternal health. The AHA is a partner in AIM and supports this national, data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative with its proven implementation approaches to improving maternal safety and outcomes.

- **Funding for State-based Perinatal Quality Collaboratives.** The AHA supports the establishment of a CDC Division of Reproductive Health program to provide states and territories development grants to improve outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women and their infants.
- **Extending postpartum coverage for women enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).** Current law provides a federal match for 60 days postpartum. This bill would increase this period to one year, allowing providers to better coordinate services for mothers across the continuum of care. Additionally, your bill would require Medicaid and CHIP coverage for preventive, diagnostic, periodontal and restorative oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women. We recognize the nexus between oral health and healthy pregnancies.
- **Addressing implicit bias and cultural competency.** The bill would establish regional centers of excellence to improve how health care professionals interact with patients. Entities including teaching hospitals, health systems and medical schools could qualify for grants to improve training for health care professionals regarding implicit bias and cultural competence.
- **Extending supplemental nutrition services for women.** The bill would provide states the option to offer Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children benefits to women for two years postpartum, an increase from the current standard of up to one year.

The American Hospital Association commends you for your leadership on this issue and your commitment to improve maternal health. We stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President