

November 19, 2019

The Honorable Robin L. Kelly
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess
United State House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lauren Underwood
United State House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
United State House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kelly, Burgess, Underwood and McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and 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 your legislation, H.R. 4996, the Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services 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.

Your bipartisan legislation would allow providers to better coordinate services for mothers across the continuum of care by giving states the option to extend postpartum coverage for women enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for one year, an increase over current law, which provides a federal match for 60 days postpartum coverage. The bill would provide a 5% increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for the first year a state opts to extend the coverage. We appreciate this first step in recognizing the important link between health care coverage and improving maternal health and look forward to further legislative efforts in this area.



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Page Two

Additionally, H.R. 4996 would require the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission to issue a report on access to doula care in Medicaid, including strategies to increase the use of doula care; the use of doulas has been seen as one potential means to improve maternal health outcomes, especially for women of color.

We commend you for your leadership on this issue and your commitment to improve maternal health and stand ready to work with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President