

April 3, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies Committee on  
Appropriations  
United States House of  
Representatives Washington, D.C.  
20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro ☐  
Ranking Member ☐  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of  
Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin work on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies move forward with the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies on Appropriations bill, the below undersigned organizations strongly urge your Subcommittee to allocate \$5 million for Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression, as authorized by Section 10005 of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-146), at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), within the Department of Health and Human Services.

Maternal mental health disorders, commonly known as postpartum depression (PPD), are very common, impacting up to 1 in 5 women (or approximately 20%) during pregnancy or up to one year post delivery. PPD is the most common complication of pregnancy. Symptoms can include depression, multiple forms of anxiety, or even a severe condition known as postpartum psychosis. Postpartum psychosis carries an increased risk of suicide, which is the second leading cause of death in new mothers.

These funds will increase access to screening and treatment for postpartum depression by providing additional resources to states to build on successful local efforts to develop and implement programs to improve and increase both screening and treatment, tailored to the needs of women and families in various geographical, ethnic, racial and cultural communities. Better screening and treatment of maternal depression will not only prevent adverse outcomes for women, children and their families, it will create significant cost savings through early detection and prevention.

As the Subcommittee develops appropriations legislation for FY 2018, we respectfully request that Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression be allocated the fully authorized amount of \$5 million at HRSA. Monies allocated to

this program will see incalculable positive outcomes for mothers and families being faced with maternal mental health challenges across our great nation. We believe that HRSA is well positioned to administer this program. Specifically, HRSA's specifically its Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports programs and services in all 50 states to improve women's health before, during and beyond pregnancy. HRSA also has a demonstrated history of working successfully with the health care provider community.

In addition to appropriations allocations for the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Depression program, we strongly recommend that it be administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports programs and services in all 50 states to improve women's health before, during and beyond pregnancy. HRSA also has a demonstrated history of working successfully with the health care provider community.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, and we urge the Committee to prioritize implementation of this critical program. We look forward to working with you to address this all too common condition. For more information, please contact Jamie Zahlaway Belsito, Advocacy Chair, the National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health at [jamie@mmhcoalition.com](mailto:jamie@mmhcoalition.com) or 978.998.1160.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Art Therapy Association  
The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecologists  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Psychological Association  
Arizona's Children Association  
AspireMN (formerly known as the Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies)  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association for Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Benchmarks of North Carolina  
Children's Law Center  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Indiana Association of Resources & Child Advocacy  
Mental Health America  
March of Dimes  
Moms Mental Health Initiative

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Organization of State Associations for Children  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.  
NHMH (No Health without Mental Health)  
Postpartum Support International  
Postpartum Support Virginia  
The Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc.  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine  
Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families  
Treatment Communities of America  
Utah Maternal Mental Health Collaborative  
Young Invincibles  
ZERO TO THREE