November 14, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman, Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of the 96 undersigned national, regional, and local organizations in the maternal, children, and mental health space who support the health and wellbeing of pregnant women and new mothers, we would like to thank you for your continued support of vital maternal mental health programs. These programs help take the pressure off our overburdened health care system, keep families whole, and save lives. We respectfully request the inclusion of the Senate’s $11 million, a $1 million increase, and report language for the Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Grants (MMHSUD) Program and the $7 million in level funding in addition to the House of Representative’s LHHS report language for the Maternal Mental Health Hotline within the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations package.

In the United States, 1 in 5 women are affected by maternal mental health (MMH) conditions – including anxiety, depression, substance use disorder -- during pregnancy or the year following pregnancy. These illnesses are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, impacting 800,000 American families each year. Women of color, servicemembers, and military spouses experience MMH conditions at nearly twice the national average. Unfortunately, 75% of women remain untreated, costing our nation $14 billion each year. MMH conditions contribute to the United States’ high maternal mortality rate, with suicide and overdose being the leading cause of death for women in the first year following pregnancy.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (PL 117-328) included the bipartisan, bicameral Into the Light for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Act, which reauthorized the Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder (MMHSUD) State Grant Program and increased annual funding from $5 million to $24 million. When this program was initially launched in 2018, 30 states and territories applied but limited funding meant only seven states received grants. We commend the Committee for increasing appropriations to $10 million in FY23 and are pleased to report that the following twelve states were awarded grants on September 27:

1 ACOG Committee Opinion 757 (2018).
6 Byatt (2015). Obstetrics & Gynecology, 126(5); 1048-1058.
California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

While we are disappointed that the full authorization level ($24 million) for this program was not reached for FY24, we appreciate the Committees’ continued work and funding to support our nation’s mothers. With that, we respectfully request in your conference negotiations that you include $11 million, $1 million over the FY23 enacted level, and report language as included in the Senate LHHS Appropriations bill and report (#118-84), for the final LHHS FY24 Appropriations package. This additional $1 million will allow up to two new states to receive funding for programs that help treat women who are struggling with MMH conditions. This early intervention and support can help keep families whole, but most importantly save lives.

Second, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (PL 117-328) also authorized the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline within the Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) at $10 million in FY23. The Hotline provides 24/7 voice and text support in English and Spanish for women struggling with MMH conditions, serving over 1,000 families each month.10 We respectfully request keeping the level funding at minimum and that in your conference negotiations that you include the report language from the House LHHS Report in the final FY24 LHHS Joint Explanatory Statement for the Maternal Mental Health Hotline. The language ensures that HRSA is fulfilling critical components of the authorization including providing support to military servicemembers and spouses, conducting a public awareness campaign to promote the Hotline, and consulting with federal agencies to increase awareness of the Hotline.11

On behalf of the 4 million parents who give birth each year in the United States, we thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
2 Degrees Foundation
All Families Birth & Wellness Services
American Brain Coalition
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Medical Women’s Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
Anaya Women's OB/GYN Group
Arbit Counseling
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Bethesda Women's Mental Health
Birth It Forward
Black Mamas Community Collective (aka Black Mamas ATX)
Blissful Beginnings Doula Services LLC
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Brii Biosciences
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action
Erika Kuhn LCWS LLC
Hand to Hold
HealthyWomen
Heart and Hands Midwifery and Family Healthcare
Hope for HIE
Ingram Screening, LLC
Inseparable
Integrative Therapy of Greater Washington, LLC
International Association for Premenstrual Disorders (IAPMD)
International OCD Foundation
Legacy Community Health
Lifeline for Families Center and the Lifeline for Moms Program at UMass Chan Medical School
Lighthouse Counseling Services
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Mass. PPD Fund
Maternal Mental Health NOW
Meharry Medical College
Mental Health America
Mental Health America of Ohio
Military Birth Resource Network and Postpartum Coalition
Mind Body Baby NC
Mission: Motherhood
Molly Coffin Therapy, PLLC
Moms Mental Health Initiative, Inc
MomsRising
Momwell
Mon Health Medical Center, Progressing through Postpartum Program
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Eating Disorders Association
National Perinatal Association
No Health without Mental Health (NHMH)
Ohana Homefront Foundation
Perinatal Prana LLC
Perinatal Support Washington
Postpartum Support International
Postpartum Support International – California Chapter
Postpartum Support International -- South Dakota Chapter
Postpartum Wellness Foundation
Progressing Through Postpartum -- Mon Health Medical Center
Project TEACH NY
PSI Alaska
pumpspotting
Purchaser Business Group on Health
Rebekah N. Jensen LCSW LLC
REDC Consortium
Return to Zero: HOPE
RI International
RI MomsPRN
Seleni Institute
Seven Starling
Shades of Blue Project
SHÈN
Society for Women's Health Research
TEEG
The Colette Louise Tisdahl Foundation
The Family Place
The Foundation for Delaware County
The HealthCare Connection
The Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc.
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
The Youth Power Project
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
University of California San Francisco Medical Center
University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry
Utah Department of Health and Human Services
Waypoint Counseling and Maternal Wellness
Women of Color Health Equity Collective
Women's Wellbeing Program, University of Minnesota Medical Center
Women’s Health Innovation of Arizona
Your Black Breastie
YWCA High Point
Zero Overdose Corp.