

May 31, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies Room  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations  
Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 2051

Dear Chairwoman Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We, the 106 undersigned organizations who represent and care for the health and wellness of mothers, babies, and families, are writing to request funding and provisions to address maternal mental health as the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress considers the Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

The United States continues to have the highest rate of maternal mortality of any high-income nation: our nation's maternal mortality rate in 2022 was 22 deaths per 100,000 live births, more than triple the rates in most European and Asian countries.<sup>1</sup> According to reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ***mental health conditions are the leading cause of maternal mortality***, accounting for 23% of pregnancy-related deaths.<sup>2</sup>

***By investing in maternal mental health, Congress can help save the lives of mothers across the country.***

Maternal mental health (MMH) conditions\* are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 pregnant women or new mothers, or 800,000 American families each year.<sup>3,4</sup> Certain groups of women – including service members, women who live in rural areas, and women of color – are at increased risk, experiencing MMH conditions at 2-3 times the national average.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gunja, Munira et al. *Insights into the U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis: An International Comparison*. The Commonwealth Fund. June 4, 2024. [LINK](#)

<sup>2</sup> Trost, Susanna, et al. *Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data from Maternal Mortality Review Committees in 36 States, 2017 - 2019*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [LINK](#)

\*Maternal mental health conditions include depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar illness (including postpartum psychosis) and substance use disorders.

<sup>3</sup> American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Screening for Perinatal Depression, ACOG Committee Opinion No. 757*. Obstet Gynecol. 2018;132(5):e208-12.

<sup>4</sup> Fawcett, Emily J, et al. *The Prevalence of Anxiety Disorders During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period: A Multivariate Bayesian Meta-Analysis*. J Clin Psychiatry. [LINK](#)

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Jamila, and Christy M Gamble. *Suffering in Silence: Mood Disorders Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women of Color*. Center for American Progress, November 2019. [LINK](#)

<sup>6</sup> Government Accountability Office. *Defense Health Care: Prevalence of and Efforts to Screen and Treat Mental Health Conditions in Prenatal and Postpartum TRICARE Beneficiaries*. May 23, 2022. [LINK](#)

<sup>7</sup> Agnafors, Sara, et al. *Mental Health in Young Mothers, Single Mothers and Their Children*. BMC Psychiatry 19, 112 (2019). [LINK](#)

<sup>8</sup> Goyal, Deepika, et al. *How Much Does Low Socioeconomic Status Increase the Risk of Prenatal and Postpartum Depressive Symptoms in First-Time Mothers?*. February 4, 2010. [LINK](#)

The vast majority (75%) of women who experience MMH symptoms remain untreated, increasing the risk of long-term negative impacts on the mother, baby and family – including the risk of maternal suicide and overdose.<sup>9,10,11</sup> Not accounting for the loss of life, the economic cost of not treating MMH conditions is \$32,000 per mother/infant dyad, or \$14 billion each year nationally in addressing poor health outcomes of mother and baby, as well as lost wages and productivity of the mother.<sup>12</sup>

To address this important issue, the 117th Congress passed the *Into the Light for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Act of 2022* within the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023*, thereby reauthorizing state grants to address MMH and authorizing the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline.

We write today to request funding at levels authorized under the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023* (P.L. 117-328) for these two programs, which increase support and treatment for women experiencing MMH conditions.

- 1. Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Grant Program (MMHSUD).** This program provides grants to states to create programs that address MMH conditions, including substance use. When the program was first announced in 2018, thirty states and territories applied for funding, but budget limitations resulted in just seven states receiving grants. These states have created programs that both expand the workforce to address maternal mental health conditions and provide critically needed and cost-effective services to pregnant women and new mothers suffering from maternal mental health conditions. Currently twelve states and one county (Los Angeles County) receive funding. *We request an increase of \$2,500,000 over the Fiscal Year 2025 enacted level for the Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Programs (MMHSUD), which will fund three additional programs. We also ask that the Committee encourage the Department of Health and Human Services to work to expand grants to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations.*
- 2. National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (1-833-TLC-MAMA).** The Hotline, which launched on Mother's Day 2022, provides 24/7 voice and text services in both English and Spanish for individuals experiencing MMH conditions and their loved ones. Staff for the Hotline include licensed and certified healthcare or mental health providers, along with certified peer specialists. Since its inception, the Hotline has assisted approximately 60,000+ help-seekers (70% calls, 30% texts) with an average answer time of less than 30 seconds. *We request the Committee provide an increase of \$1,000,000 over the Fiscal Year 2025 enacted level for the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline. This additional funding will be used for outreach to military mothers and those living in rural communities.*

Your support for increased resources for the **Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Grant Program (MMHSUD)** state grants and the **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline** will save lives and help families thrive.

If the committee has any questions about this letter of support, please contact Jamie Belsito, Director of Policy, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance at [jbelsito@mnhla.org](mailto:jbelsito@mnhla.org)

<sup>9</sup>Byatt, Nancy, et al. *Enhancing Participation in Depression Care in Outpatient Perinatal Care Settings: A Systematic Review*. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2015;126(5):619-625. [LINK](#)

<sup>10</sup>Field, Tiffany. *Postpartum Depression Effects on Early Interactions, Parenting, and Safety Practices: A Review*. *Infant Behavioral Health*, 2010; 33(1):1-14. [LINK](#)

<sup>11</sup> Trost, Susanna, et al.

<sup>12</sup> Luca, Dara Lee, et al. *Financial Toll of Untreated Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Among 2017 Births in the United States*. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2022; 110, 888-896. [LINK](#)

Sincerely,

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Academy of Childbirth Educators and Doulas  
America Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Psychiatric Association  
Anchor Perinatal Wellness  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Azure Psychotherapy LLC  
Bay State Birth Coalition  
Behavioral Wellness for Women  
Beyond the Baby Blues  
Black Girl Solutions, LLC  
Boston Chapter - Chamber of Mothers  
California Chapter of Postpartum Support International  
Chamber of Mothers Chicago  
Chamber of Mothers- Cincinnati Chapter  
Chamber of Mothers- Illinois  
Chamber of Mothers- New York  
Chamber of Mothers- Texas  
Children's Defense Fund  
Cincy Postpartum  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Collaborative Family Healthcare Association ( CFHA)  
Colorado Perinatal Mental Health Project  
Concert Health  
Dionysus Digital Health, Inc  
Embark Counseling Services, LLC  
Every Mother Counts  
EveryMom Chicago  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Global Military Lactation Community  
Gold Coast Doulas  
Hart Counseling  
HealthyWomen  
Hope for HIE  
Innsena, LLC  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Jess Feldt Coaching  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Legal Action Center  
Let Mommy Sleep

Lifeline for Families Center and Lifeline for Moms Program @ UMass Chan  
Luna & Sol Community Healing Collective  
Mama2Mama  
Mammha  
March of Dimes  
Mass. PPD Fund  
Mavida Health  
Mission: Motherhood  
MMHLA  
Moms Mental Health Initiative, Inc.  
MomsRising  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health  
National Coalition for Infant Health  
National Diaper Bank Network  
National Eating Disorders Association  
National Perinatal Association  
New Jersey Health Cares About Domestic and Sexual Violence Collaborative  
New Moms  
Newberg Counseling & Wellness, LLC  
NICU Parent Network  
No Health Without Mental Health  
North Shore Postpartum Help  
Nurture Mental Health  
Our Bodies Ourselves  
Perinatal Support Washington  
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health  
Postpartum Resource Center of New York  
Postpartum Support International  
Postpartum Support International - Indiana Chapter  
Postpartum Support International - New Mexico Chapter  
Postpartum Support International- Arizona  
Postpartum Support International- Hawai'i Chapter  
Postpartum Support International- Iowa  
Postpartum Support International- Kansas  
Postpartum Support International- Utah  
Radiating Joy Mental Health Services  
Reunion Neuroscience  
Riverside Community Care  
Save Texas Moms  
Shades of Blue Project  
Shades of You, Shades of Me  
SHIELDS for Families  
Solution-Focused Therapy Services, LLC  
Steady Hope, LLC

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas  
The Body Collaborative  
The Colette Louise Tisdahl Foundation  
The Connecticut Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Coalition  
The Diaper Bank of Connecticut  
The Foundation for Delaware County  
The Lilith Center for Women  
The Tiny Miracles Foundation  
Through to Thrive  
TogetherWell Therapy  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee  
UMN Women's Wellbeing Program, Dept of Psychiatry  
Wholymom Coaching LLC  
Wildflower Health  
Will County Health Department  
Womb Wisdom Wellness LLC  
Women and Children: Counseling, Consulting & Educating LLC  
Women's Therapy & Wellness  
ZERO TO THREE