NAACP URGES SWIFT PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO PREVENT MATERNAL AND INFANT DEATHS

A DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN WHO LOSE THEIR LIVES DUE TO CHILDBIRTH ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN; A MAJORITY OF DEATHS ARE PREVENTABLE

THE ISSUE:
While all sorts of health care disparities exist in America today, none is perhaps as glaring as “maternal mortality” (the death of a mother or child as a result of the pregnancy or childbirth). Nationally, African American mothers are 3-4 times more likely to die from pregnancy and birth-related complications than their white counterparts. On average, maternal mortality claims the lives of approximately 700 American mothers each year, and this number is on the rise: over the last two decades, the rate of maternal mortality in America has doubled. Most shockingly, a recent report by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) shows that 60 percent of these deaths are entirely preventable.

To combat the maternal mortality trend which is especially dire in the African American community, Senator Richard Durbin (IL) and Congresswoman Robin Kelly (IL) (chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust) have introduced H.R. 1897 / S. 916, the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMAs) Act. This important legislation uses a proven multi-pronged approach to address and reduce maternal deaths which includes expanding Medicaid coverage, from the current level of 60 days to 1 year to cover a new mom’s entire post-partum period; standardize data collection and analysis so we can better understand and address the root causes of elevated levels of maternal morbidity rates, particularly for the African American community; and improve access to culturally competent care throughout the care continuum.
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact your Representative and both your Senators and URGE THEM TO CO-SPONSOR AND SUPPORT HR 1897/ S 916. To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
   Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

✓ Write a Letter
   To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
   The Honorable (name of Senator)
   U.S. Senate
   Washington, D.C. 20510
   To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:
   The Honorable (name of Representative)
   U.S. House of Representatives
   Washington, D.C. 20515

✓ Send a Fax
   If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' or Representative's offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ Send an E-Mail
   To send an email to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and on the home page click “Representatives”. This will allow you to click your Representative either by state or by name. Click on your Representative and you will be directed to his/her web page, which will have instructions on how to send an e-mail. The homepage of www.house.gov also has a tool to help you identify who your Representative is.
   To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov and click on “Contact” under “Senators.” You can look up your Senators by name or state; go to their websites to send an e-mail.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- On average, maternal mortality claims the lives of approximately 700 American mothers each year;

- Over the last two decades, the rate of maternal mortality in America has doubled;

- Most shockingly, a recent report by the Center for Disease Control shows that 60 percent of these deaths are entirely preventable;

- The Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMAs) Act uses a proven multi-pronged approach to address and reduce maternal deaths.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

Membership is power! Join the NAACP today.
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(date)

The Honorable ___________________________
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20510 / 20515

RE: MY SUPPORT FOR HR 1897 / S 916, THE MOTHERS AND OFFSPRING MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY AWARENESS (MOMMAs) ACT

Dear Senator / Representative ______________________________;

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to support H.R. 1897 / S. 916, the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMAs) Act. While all sorts of health care disparities exist in America today, none is perhaps as glaring as maternal mortality. Nationally, African American mothers are 3-4 times more likely to die from pregnancy and birth complications than their white counterparts. This statistic is as alarming as it is avoidable: a recent report by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) shows that 60 percent of these deaths are entirely preventable.

On average, maternal mortality claims the lives of approximately 700 American mothers each year, and this number is on the rise: over the last two decades, the rate of maternal mortality in America has doubled.

H.R. 1897 / S. 916, the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMAs) Act uses a proven multi-pronged approach to address and reduce maternal deaths which includes expanding Medicaid coverage, from the current level of 60 days to 1 year to cover a new mom’s entire post-partum period; standardizing data collection and analysis so we can better understand and address the root causes of elevated levels of maternal morbidity rates, particularly for the African American community; and improving access to culturally competent care throughout the care continuum.

It is because the maternal mortality rate is so unacceptably high, and frankly preventable that I strongly urge you to co-sponsor, if you have not already, and strongly support H.R. 1897 / S. 916, the MOMMAs Act. Please let me know what you intend to do about his problem and tell me how I can help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)

Remember to contact your Representative and BOTH your Senators.