

October 28, 2024

The Honorable Lois Frankel
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
U.S. House of Representatives
2052 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Elvira Salazar
U.S. House of Representatives
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Julia Letlow
U.S. House of Representatives
142 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Frankel, Salazar, Castor, and Letlow:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our support for H.R. 8532, the “Connected Maternal Online Monitoring Act” (or the “Connected MOM Act”), which would require the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to send a report to Congress that identifies barriers to coverage of remote physiologic devices (e.g., pulse oximeters, blood pressure cuffs, scales, blood glucose monitors) under State Medicaid programs to improve maternal and child health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women. This bipartisan legislation would also require CMS to update state resources, such as state Medicaid telehealth toolkits, to align with evidence-based recommendations to help decrease maternal mortality and morbidity.

Medicaid paid for about 41 percent of all births nationally in 2021 and plays a critical role in providing maternity-related services for pregnant women.¹ Moreover, Medicaid covers the vast majority of births among American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic (67 percent), Black non-Hispanic (65 percent), and Hispanic or Latina (60 percent) women as well as women living in rural areas of the country.²

The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 60 percent or more of these maternal deaths are preventable. Accordingly, many of these pregnancy related complications can be treated. For example, preeclampsia which is a hypertensive disease that develops during pregnancy and accounts for “two to eight percent of pregnancy-related complications, greater than 50,000 maternal deaths, and over 500,000 fetal deaths worldwide” can be alleviated with prompt and consistent treatment, that in many instances could be provided remotely.³ Therefore, tools such as remote monitoring devices can play an important role in

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db468.htm>.

² Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), June 2020 Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP, (See Chapter 5: Medicaid’s Role in Maternal Health). <https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/June-2020-Report-to-Congress-on-Medicaid-and-CHIP.pdf>.

³ Karrar SA, Hong PL. Preeclampsia. [Updated 2023 Feb 13]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK570611>.

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helping to mitigate the negative health outcomes associated with a number of preventable pregnancy related complications.

The AMA believes that telehealth and remote patient monitoring are a critical part of the future of effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of health care in the U.S. Telehealth and remote patient monitoring usage vastly expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping Americans access health care services while maintaining social distancing and reducing strain on hospitals and physician clinics. With this expansion of services has come recognition from patients, physicians, and other health care providers that telehealth and remote patient monitoring services offer effective and convenient health care in many circumstances. The AMA believes that the “Connected MOM Act” would significantly improve maternal and infant health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum individuals across the U.S, especially for people of color, those who are high-risk, lower income families, and those living in rural areas.

The AMA is committed to addressing the issues surrounding maternal mortality and morbidity and working with Congress to develop solutions aimed at improving maternal health outcomes, nationwide.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James L. Madara', written in a cursive style.

James L. Madara, MD