

July 10, 2023

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD
United States Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cassidy and Hassan:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our support for S.712 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 slightly less than half of all births nationally in 2018 and plays a critical role in providing maternity-related services for pregnant women. 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.¹

The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries and according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 60 percent or more of these maternal deaths are preventable. Furthermore, CDC data show that Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women.² However, many of these pregnancy related complications are treatable such as preeclampsia which is a hypertensive disease that develops during pregnancy. “This disease encompasses two to eight percent of pregnancy-related complications, greater than 50,000 maternal deaths, and over 500,000 fetal deaths worldwide. Early diagnosis and prompt management are essential to prevent morbidity and mortality associated with preeclampsia.”³ Therefore, tools such as remote monitoring devices can play an important role in helping to mitigate the negative health outcomes associated with these complications.

¹ 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>.

² Infographic: Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths –United States, 2007-2016, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/disparities-pregnancy-related-deaths/infographic.html>, last reviewed on April 13, 2022.

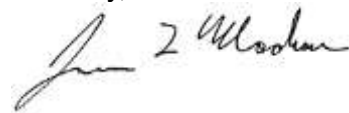
³ Karrar SA, Hong PL. Preeclampsia. [Updated 2023 Feb 13]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK570611/>

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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 United States. 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 women across the United States, especially for women of color, those who are high-risk, lower income families, and those living in rural areas.

The AMA is committed to tackling the issues surrounding maternal mortality and morbidity and working with stakeholders, like CMS and Congress, to find solutions aimed at better 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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD