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January 9, 2017

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, MD
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Burgess:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express support for H.R. 315, the "Improving Access to Maternity Care Act." This legislation would help improve access to maternity care for patients in rural and underserved areas by creating a specific health professional shortage area for maternity care services and enabling the Department of Health and Human Services to place eligible health professionals already participating in the National Health Service Corps in an area experiencing maternity care shortages.

According to the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, access to maternity care professionals is a significant issue in many parts of the country. Inadequate access to maternal and reproductive care can lead to long waiting times for appointments and long travel times to prenatal care and birthing sites. Moreover, inadequate access to prenatal care can result in low birth weight babies and an increase in infant mortality. The AMA supports expanding access to high-quality obstetric and newborn care by qualified obstetricians, family physicians, and pediatricians and making such care available to all women and newborns in the United States. H.R. 315 would be an important step toward expanding such access.

Thank you for your leadership on this significant issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James L. Madara, MD