



**JAMES L. MADARA, MD**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org  
t (312) 464-5000

February 20, 2018

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senate  
156 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senate  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Heitkamp and Capito:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of S. 1112, the “Maternal Health Accountability Act.” This bill would help states create or support Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs) to examine pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths and identify ways to reduce these tragic deaths. It will also improve data collection and address disparities in maternal health outcomes.

The United States lags far behind all other industrialized countries in reducing maternal deaths and is the only high-resource country with a rising maternal mortality rate. Pregnancy-related deaths have doubled in the U.S. in the past 25 years; an estimated 700 women die of pregnancy-related causes each year in the U.S., with another 65,000 women suffering serious health complications. Many of these deaths and complications can be prevented. Women who die from pregnancy or childbirth complications have disproportionately high rates of chronic disease, including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. More than a quarter of all pregnant women in the U.S. are afflicted with these health conditions. Moreover, there are significant and widening disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity, disproportionately impacting black women in the U.S.

The Maternal Health Accountability Act would authorize funding for grants to states for MMRCs to bring together local medical experts, including obstetrician-gynecologists, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals to review individual maternal deaths and recommend solutions to prevent similar events. MMRCs are essential to understanding maternal deaths and identifying opportunities for prevention, yet seventeen states still have yet to create an MMRC. Your legislation would authorize the resources to allow these states to create their own MMRCs and for states with existing MMRCs to continue funding and improving their MMRCs.

We applaud you for your leadership in sponsoring this important bill to prevent maternal deaths and look forward to supporting your efforts to see it enacted.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD