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July 14, 2020

The Honorable Ben Watson
Georgia State Senate
320-B Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Senator Watson:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I write to thank you for your action to extend Medicaid coverage in Georgia for six months postpartum. High maternal mortality rates are a crisis in Georgia and across the country, and we applaud you for prioritizing maternal health.

With half of all births covered by Medicaid, the program has long served as a vital safety net that helps ensure low-income women have access to the care they need during pregnancy and childbirth. Historically, however, Medicaid coverage terminated shortly after birth. Yet research shows that pregnancy-related deaths occur across a lengthy time span, with about one-third or 33 percent happening one week to one-year postpartum. Tragically, an estimated 60 percent of all maternal deaths are preventable. By extending Medicaid coverage six months after birth, low-income women in Georgia will be better able to access the care they need during the critical postpartum period. This is an important step toward reducing maternal mortality.

We thank you for your attention and leadership on this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact Annalia Michelman, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Medical Association of Georgia
Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, MD
Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA