



James L. Madara, MD
CEO, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

james.madara@ama-assn.org

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin and Duckworth:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our support for S. 411, the “Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness Act” or the “MOMMA’s Act.”

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 to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women. As such, the AMA is committed to working with a variety of stakeholders to tackle the issues surrounding maternal mortality and morbidity.

The MOMMA’s Act would extend the current 60-day coverage for postpartum care to one year under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. This is critical, because we know that about 33 percent of pregnancy-related deaths happen between one week and one year after childbirth. The expansion of maternity care under Medicaid is particularly important as this program pays for more than 40 percent of all births.

A growing body of research suggests that disparities within maternal mortality and morbidity remain even when controlling for education, income, and health. The MOMMA’s Act would address these disparities by supporting the training of clinicians on implicit bias and health equity issues. Recent studies have found that college-educated Black mothers who gave birth in local hospitals were more likely to suffer severe complications from pregnancy or childbirth than White women who did not complete high school. This finding highlights the profound inequities within our medical system and the pressing need for implicit bias training. The AMA believes that implicit bias training for health care professionals in conjunction with expanded efforts to train and deploy a health care workforce that displays diversity of backgrounds and experiences will help to reduce these inequities. In addition, the MOMMA’s Act would ensure dissemination of best shared practices and coordination among maternal mortality review committees to increase standardization of data collection and reporting.

Pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period will always carry some degree of risk. We as a nation must do all we can to minimize that risk and help ensure that mothers and their babies thrive throughout pregnancy and for the rest of their lives. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD