

April 30, 2015

The Honorable Mark Kirk  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Burgess  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lois Capps  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Kirk and Baldwin and Representatives Burgess, Capps, and Duckworth:

On behalf of the undersigned national nursing organizations, we write to strongly support the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (H.R. 1209, S. 628). We applaud this bipartisan effort to address the needs of pregnant women and their newborns.

This legislation creates a health professional shortage area designation for maternity care services. The goal of this legislation is to identify areas of the United States that are experiencing significant shortages of full scope maternity care professionals and make it possible for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to place eligible professionals within the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in these areas to address the provider shortages. These professionals will be placed in eligible medical facilities, including hospitals, birth centers, and other appropriate facilities.

We believe expanding access to maternity care professionals in underserved areas can reduce overall maternity care costs in the United States by ensuring women that have access to necessary prenatal care and delivery options in the areas where they live.

Shortages of maternity care providers can result in long waiting times for appointments as well as long travel times to prenatal care and/or birthing sites. Maternity care providers have become particularly prone to workforce challenges due to concerns surrounding professional liability, low reimbursement rates, and unpredictable working hours. These factors have contributed to inadequate access to maternal and reproductive care, especially in underserved communities.

There are approximately 4 million births in the United States each year. Hospital discharges associated with birth and newborn care far outnumber discharges associated with any other major diagnostic category. This legislation will help ensure an adequate supply of maternity care providers to address the challenges we face related to the volume of births as well as those arising from uneven distribution of providers.

This cost neutral legislation does not increase the authorization of the NHSC but instead ensures that maternity care providers, including certified nurse-midwives and obstetricians/gynecologists, working through the NHSC, are sent to the communities that need

them the most. If our organizations can be of assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact Patrick Cooney with the American College of Nurse-Midwives, at [patrick@federalgrp.com](mailto:patrick@federalgrp.com) or (202) 347-0034.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Nurses Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association  
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses  
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing  
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Public Health Nurses  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Infusion Nurses Society  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
National American Arab Nurses Association  
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
National Gerontological Nursing Association  
National Nursing Centers Consortium  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties  
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing  
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates