Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chairman Tester, and Ranking Member Shelby:

We, the 114 undersigned organizations who represent and care for the health and wellness of mothers and babies in our country, are writing to request funding and provisions to address maternal mental health (MMH) as the 117th Congress considers the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget.

Tragically, suicide and overdose combined are the leading cause of death for new mothers.1 2 MMH disorders are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 pregnant women or new mothers, or 800,000 American families each year.3 4 5 However, only 25% of those impacted are identified and receive any treatment.6 Women who face racial or economic inequities experience MMH conditions at 2-3 times the rate of white or higher-income individuals, but are less likely to be identified or receive treatment.7 8 Untreated MMH disorders can have long-term negative impact on parent, baby, family, and society.9 10 11 12 The cost of not treating MMH disorders is $32,000 per mother/infant dyad, or $14 billion

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each year in addressing poor health outcomes of mother and baby, lost wages, and lowered productivity.\textsuperscript{13} The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a three-fold increase in the number of women and childbearing individuals experiencing MMH disorders.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, we write to request increased funding for three specific programs to increase research and provide support and treatment to those experiencing MMH conditions

1. **HRSA grants to states.** HRSA’s Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavior Disorders Program provides grants to states to address MMH conditions. Thirty states and territories applied for funding when the program was announced, but budget limitations resulted in just seven states receiving grants. These states have created programs that provide both expand the workforce to address MMH conditions and provide critically-needed and cost-effective services to pregnant women and new mothers. We thank the Committees for including an additional $1.5 million increase in funding for FY2022 Appropriations but recognize this will not meet states’ needs. *We request an additional $5 million in FY2023 funding to provide grants to five additional states and technical assistance to non-grantee states.*

2. **MMH Hotline.** The MMH hotline, created through the FY2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act, provides 24/7/365 voice and text services in both English and Spanish for individuals experiencing MMH disorders and those who love and care for them. Staff for the MMH hotline include licensed and certified healthcare or mental health providers, along with certified peer specialists. We thank the Committees for the $1 million increase in FY 2022 Appropriations which was needed to build out the hotline's basic services. *We request an additional $2 million in FY2023 funding for the MMH hotline to increase public awareness, expand services to include maternal substance use disorder support, and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care.*

3. **DoD’s Peer Reviewed Medical Research Programs – Maternal Mental Health Research.** Members of the Armed Services and their spouses are more likely to experience MMH disorders than their civilian counterparts; however, there are significant gaps in research on why and how to best prevent, intervene, and treat these vulnerable populations. *We request that the FY2023 Senate Defense Appropriations package include “maternal mental health” as a topic area for research under the DoD’s Peer Review Medical Research Program.*

Increased resources for these three programs will help ensure that mothers will have access to the mental health support and care that they – and their babies – need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
&Mother
2020 Mom

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Susan Benjamin Feingold PsyD and Associates LLC

Yale School of Public Health

Swope Health Services OBGYN

Zero to Three

The Ohio State University

UCONN Health

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

University of Minnesota

University of Missouri - Columbia

University of Missouri School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

University of New Mexico

University of Pennsylvania

University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry

University of Washington

Vermont Center for Children, Youth and Families at the University of Vermont Medical Center

Virginia Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives

Waverly Health Center Behavioral Health Department

Werk it Moms LLC

Women's Wellbeing Program, University of Minnesota MHealth Fairview, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

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