



January 6, 2014

Diane Rowland, Sc.D.
Chair
Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission
1330 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Anne L. Schwartz, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission
1800 M Street, NW
Suite 650 South
Washington, DC 20036

Letter via email, hardcopy to follow

Dear Chairwoman Rowland and Dr. Schwartz:

Today, the Medicaid program plays a pivotal role in ensuring women have access to quality maternity care in the U.S. As such, the undersigned organizations believe it essential that the program be evaluated on an ongoing basis to identify problems and appropriate solutions with regard to maternity care that can be presented to the Congress, States, and the Administration for their consideration.

We are a group of national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations that promote high quality maternity care for all women and newborns.

In its June 2013 report to Congress, the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) provided important detail on the status of maternity care under Medicaid. The report provides a baseline of information on eligibility requirements, expenditures, quality, and access. MACPAC commissioners also recently considered a draft chapter on pregnancy coverage for inclusion in the March 2014 report. We express our support for MACPAC's examination of this important aspect of health care. We note, however, that the June 2013 report does not include specific recommendations for Medicaid/CHIP programs to improve the quality and value of maternity and infant care provided under those programs.

Our organizations would like to endorse several concepts related to maternity care, and encourage MACPAC to consider using them as the basis for specific recommendations to the Congress in future reports. Our specific recommendations are attached to this letter.

Additionally, we note that in 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) convened an expert panel to provide the agency with a report outlining strategies to support states and providers in improving maternal and infant health outcomes in Medicaid/CHIP. This report was completed in 2013 but is not yet publicly available. We believe it could provide guidance to MACPAC as it considers what sorts of recommendations to make to the Congress and we encourage MACPAC to contact CMS to obtain a copy of that report.

We thank you for your consideration of these suggestions. Should you have any question about our recommendations, please contact Jesse Bushman, Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs for the American College of Nurse Midwives, at jbushman@acnm.org or 240-485-1843.

Sincerely,

American Association of Birth Centers (Karen Fennell, at fennell.karen.s@gmail.com)

American College of Nurse Midwives (Jesse Bushman, at jbushman@acnm.org)

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (Déodonné Bhattarai, at dbhattarai@apiahf.org)

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (Kerri Wade, at kwade@awhonn.org)

Centering Healthcare Institute (Lisa Summers, at lsummers@centeringhealthcare.org)

National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (Mary Lawlor, at executivedirector@nacpm.org)

Attachment