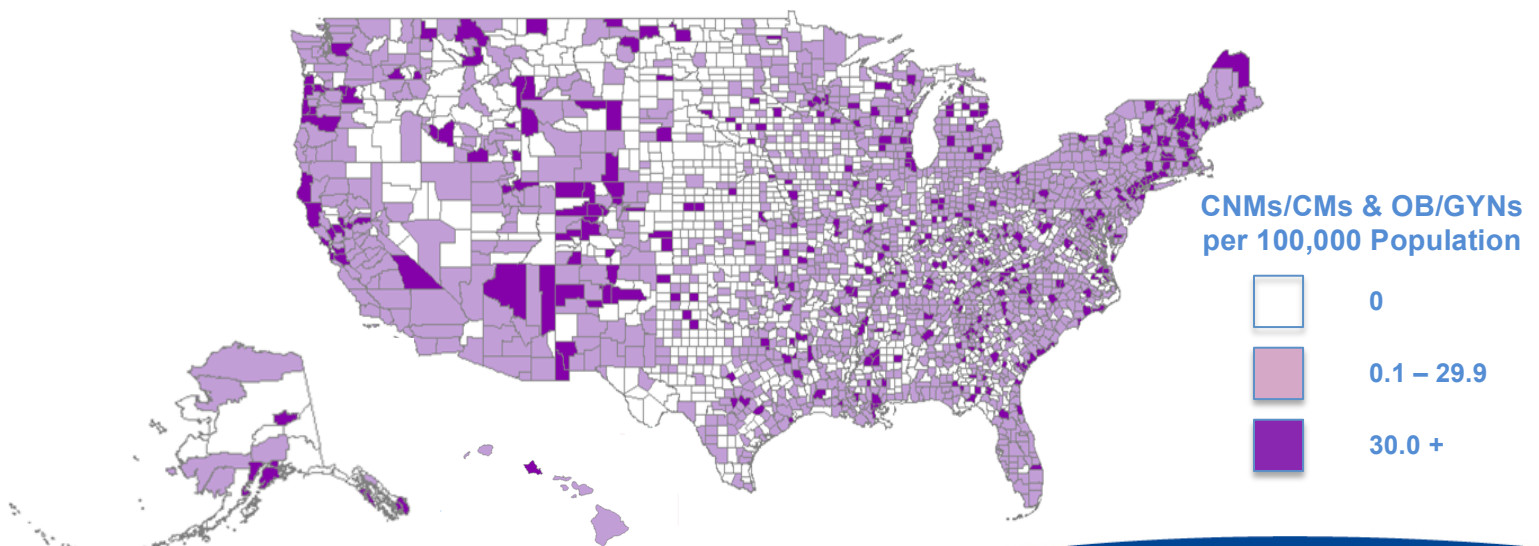


Improving Access to Maternity Care Act of 2015 (H.R. 1209/S. 628)

Why this Legislation is Needed

- In 2013, there were approximately 3.93 million US births, a number that is projected to be more than 4.4 million in 2050. The population of women over the age of 15 is expected to grow by 36 million in that same timeframe. (CDC Vital Stats data and Census Bureau population projections)
- In 2013, there were a total of four maternal care providers (CNMs/CMs and OB/GYNs) for every 10,000 women (age 15+) in the country. (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and American Midwifery Certification Board).
- The number of medical school graduates entering OB/GYN residencies has remained essentially flat for three decades. There were 1,163 first year OB/GYN residents in 1979. In 2014, there were 1,221. (William F. Rayburn, MD, MBA, FACOG, "The Obstetrician Gynecologist Workforce in the United States: Facts, Figures, and Implications, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2011.)
- The number of graduates from midwifery education programs (CNMs/CMs) has been growing, but absolute numbers are still small relatively to population needs. In 1979, there were 192 new CNM/CM certificants. In 2014, there were 576. (American Midwifery Certification Board).
- The character of the OB/GYN workforce has gone through a dramatic transformation in the last four decades. In 1975, only 15 percent of first year OB/GYN residents were women. In 2013, that figure was 82.6 percent.
 - Female and male physicians balance their professional and personal lives differently. Women work fewer hours, work part time more often and retire several years earlier. This has significant ramification for workforce capacity in the coming years. (Rayburn, 2011).
- For millions of women, shortages of maternity care providers can result in long wait times for appointments and long travel times to prenatal care and/or birthing sites. Prenatal care has an impact on incidence of low-birth weight and premature births, which can have life long repercussions and costs.
- **In 2011, 40 percent of US counties had no CNM/CM or OB/GYN. (HRSA's Area Resource File)**



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What this Legislation Would Do

- The “Improving Access to Maternity Care Act of 2015” would require the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to identify areas experiencing a shortage of full scope maternity care professionals and facilities with labor and delivery units (hospitals and birth centers).
- HRSA currently identifies three other types of shortage areas (primary care, mental health and dental care). There is thus an established mechanism for developing these area identifiers.

Impact on the National Health Service Corps

- HRSA fosters placement of health care professionals in currently designated shortage areas by providing scholarships and loan repayment through the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) to professionals who agree to work in shortage areas for a specified amount of time.
- CNMs/CMs and OB/GYNs can qualify for these programs, but their qualification is based on working in an area that has been identified as experiencing a shortage of primary care professions. These shortage areas may, but do not necessarily overlap with areas of the country experiencing shortages of maternity care providers.
- The new maternity care shortage area designation will allow HRSA to support through the NHSC those professionals whose expertise best aligns with that particular type of shortage experienced in a given area.
- The legislation does not create new expenditures; rather, it better targets existing expenditures.

Becoming a Co-Sponsor

- On March 3, 2015, the “Improving Access to Maternity Care Act of 2015,” (H.R.1209/S. 628) was introduced in the House by Rep. Mike Burgess (R-TX) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) and in the Senate by Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). Bipartisan co-sponsorship has developed in both chambers.
- To cosponsor the House bill please contact Ms. Danielle Steele in Rep. Burgess’ office at Danielle.Steele@mail.house.gov or Ms. Devin McBrayer in Rep. Capps’ office at Devin.McBrayer@mail.house.gov. To cosponsor the Senate bill please contact Mr. Andrew Vogt in Senator Kirk’s office at Andrew_Vogt@kirk.senate.gov or Ms. Kathleen Laird in Senator Baldwin’s office at Kathleen_Laird@baldwin.senate.gov. You may also contact ACNM’s federal representative, Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034 x101 or via email at Patrick@federalgrp.com if you have questions regarding this issue.

