



December 8, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Chairman Baucus:

As you put finishing touches on your monumental health care reform effort, we urge you to address needs of childbearing women and newborns — one quarter of those discharged from U.S. hospitals — by clarifying Sec. 2701 provisions for Medicaid quality improvement.

We understand that when changes were made to shorten the legislation, our preferred language was deleted in the belief that maternity care would be covered under the more general quality provisions for Adults (Sec. 2701. Adult Health Quality Measures). We hope that the final legislation will recognize opportunities, through performance measurement, for improving maternity care and its impact on childbearing women *and* newborns. Their care and well-being are intertwined, and decisions made during pregnancy, around the time of birth, and in the hours after birth greatly impact newborn outcomes. The impressive quality improvement provisions of CHIPRA focus especially on pediatric care, and administrative data for newborns is most reliably available through their mothers' Medicaid numbers. We urge you not to let newborns fall through the cracks between these two pieces of legislation.

We believe the addition of fewer than 35 words could resolve this concern. For your consideration, we have attached modest proposed edits to Sec. 2701. This change would have great impact, as Medicaid pays for about 42% of the nation's 4.3 million annual births.

Please do not hesitate to reach Maureen Corry of Childbirth Connection with any questions or for additional information: corry@childbirthconnection.org or 212 777-5000 x4. Thank you for your consideration and assistance in addressing this small, but crucial, clarification.

Sincerely yours,

American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Childbirth Connection
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Our Bodies Ourelves
Raising Women's Voices