

## **Best Evidence = Better Birth Outcomes Cosponsor the MOMS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Dear Colleague,

The US spends significantly more on childbirth than any other industrialized country, but ranks far behind almost all developed countries in birth outcomes for both mothers and babies. To address these inconsistencies between our childbirth outcomes and costs I introduced legislation that promotes evidence-based maternity care, in order to maximize optimal maternity care while bending the cost curve of our childbirth expenditures. **I hope you will join me as a cosponsor of the Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act of 2013.**

Each year over 4,000,000 women give birth in this country. Hospitalization related to pregnancy and childbirth costs approximately \$86 billion each year, the highest hospitalization costs in any area of health care. The high number of procedures during most maternity hospital stays has helped to make “mother’s pregnancy and delivery” our most costly Medicaid expenditure. Yet despite our monumental investment in maternity care, childbirth continues to carry significant risks for mothers and babies, with considerable disparities in communities of color.

Many factors contribute to these poor outcomes and high costs. Most disturbing is the fact that despite a vast body of knowledge regarding best evidence-based practices in maternity care, current practice has not followed that research. There is widespread **over use** of maternity practices that have been shown to have benefit only in limited situations, and which can expose women and/or infants to risk of harm if used routinely and indiscriminately. There are also multiple non-invasive maternity practices that have been associated with considerable improvement in outcomes with no detrimental side effects, and are significantly **under used** in this country.

The MOMS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act will create a national focus on Maternity services, expand federal research on best maternity practices, and support the education of a more culturally diverse interdisciplinary maternity care workforce. Provisions of the bill include:

- Establishment of an Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of Optimal Maternity Care;
- Authorization of a national consumer education campaign to inform women and their families about what scientific evidence tell us are the best maternity practices to achieve optimal outcomes;
- Creation of a comprehensive online database for consumers and health providers that contains the best and most up to date systematic reviews of maternal and newborn care practices;
- Data collection on maternity care shortage areas;

- Expansion of federal research on best practices in maternity care;
- Development of a consensus maternity care curriculum to promote physiologic birth and promotion of strategies to integrate and coordinate education across maternity care disciplines; and
- Authorization of grant programs for maternity care professional organizations to increase the diversity of their profession.

We can do better for mothers and newborns in this country by making evidence based maternity care a national priority. To become a cosponsor of the MOMS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act, or for more information, please contact Debbie Jessup in my office: [Debbie.jessup@mail.house.gov](mailto:Debbie.jessup@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Lucille Roybal-Allard  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS