

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Ensure Access to Maternity Care in Rural and Underserved Areas Cosponsor the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (S. 783)

Dear Colleague:

Many areas throughout our country are experiencing a significant shortage of maternity care professionals. More than half of women in rural communities live more than 30 minutes away from a hospital offering perinatal services. And, nearly half of all counties in the U.S. lack a certified nurse-midwife (CNM), obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN), or maternity care professional, which reduces access to critical maternity care services, including prenatal care and delivery options, and endangers pregnant women and their babies. One million babies are born to mothers who don't receive adequate prenatal care; research shows babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be low birth weight, and five times more likely to die than babies whose mothers received care.


That's why we introduced the bipartisan *Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (S. 783)* and invite you to join us as a cosponsor. This bill would help address these workforce challenges by directing the Health Resources and Services Administration to identify maternity care shortages within these underserved and often rural areas that may be used by the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). By identifying maternity care needs within existing shortage areas, the U.S. can begin to fill this gap.

The *Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (S. 783)* is critical to facilitating a better understanding of where the serious maternity care shortages are located and to subsequently direct health care providers to those communities. The NHSC is critical to filling workforce shortages in underserved areas, with over 9,200 Corps clinicians delivering services to 9.7 million people across the U.S – many of whom stay in their communities, even after they complete the NHSC program. While ob-gyns are recognized under the primary care shortage designation, it fails to adequately address shortages in maternity care. This bill is a key first step to better target maternity care NHSC professionals where they are most needed, helping ensure healthier pregnancies and healthier babies

The *Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (S.783)* is endorsed by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), the March of Dimes, and the National Rural Health Association (NRHA).

Please join us as a cosponsor of S. 783. If you need further information, please contact Kathleen Laird on Senator Baldwin's staff at Kathleen_Laird@baldwin.senate.gov or Morgan Griffin on Senator Murkowski's staff at Morgan_Griffin@murkowski.senate.gov.

Sincerely,


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator