



Midwives for Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services, H.R. 3849

Legislative Issue Brief

POSITION:

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports H.R. 3849, the *Midwives for Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services (MOMS) Act*, legislation authorizing two federal funding streams under Title VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act to support basic and graduate nursing and midwifery education and training programs, with a specific focus on support for clinical preceptors and designated funding to increase racial and ethnic representation within midwifery programs accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). Introduced by Representatives Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA), and original cosponsors Representatives Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Darren Soto (D-FL), Gwen Moore (D-WI), Katherine Clark (D-MA), and Debra Haaland (D-NM), the *Midwives for MOMS Act* seeks to improve maternal health outcomes; ensure access to high-quality maternal health services for women, newborns, individuals, and families; and help end crisis level U.S. maternal mortality rates by expanding educational opportunities for Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs). The unprecedented, monumental legislation represents the first-time federal policymakers have prioritized investment in accredited midwifery education programs.

BACKGROUND:

Introduced on July 18, 2019, H.R. 3849 establishes two new funding streams under Title VII (Health Professions and Training Programs) and Title VIII (Nursing Workforce Development Programs) of the Public Health Service Act. The *Midwives for MOMS Act* aims to increase the number of midwives attending U.S. Department of Education-accredited midwifery programs by allocating funds that will support student midwives, establish or expand midwifery programs, and ensure support for increasing the number of preceptors at clinical training sites to mentor students training to become CNMs, CMs or CPMs. Additionally, the legislation takes deliberate steps to address the health disparities that disproportionately impact black mothers and other people of color by prioritizing midwifery programs that demonstrate a focus on strengthening and increasing racial and ethnic representation that will help to create a more diverse midwifery workforce.

Maternal and infant health is in a state of crisis in the United States with large disparities beginning in pregnancy and at birth that become magnified over time. Collective action is needed across the health care continuum to improve outcomes for this population. The United States is facing a current and increasingly severe shortage of trained maternity care providers, leaving mothers and infants across the country at risk. CNMs and CMs are urgently needed to fill the gap. Timely federal action to grow and strengthen the midwifery workforce is a key strategy to address this provider shortage and increase access to quality care, especially in high-need rural and urban areas that too often have no obstetrical providers or maternity care services at all. Direct funding for midwifery education has been identified as the number one priority for growing the workforce to meet the urgent needs of the childbearing population.

Better integration of the midwifery model of care depends on a robust workforce. The shortage of all types of maternity care providers and of maternity services in rural areas presents an opportunity to re-envision the maternity care workforce by increasing access to CNMs and CMs. Expanding funding to accredited midwifery education programs whose graduates provide high-value care and are educated in fewer years at lower cost than physicians; and whose composition better reflects the diversity of childbearing families will increase access to quality care and improve maternal health outcomes across the United States.

The Title VII and Title VIII programs help shape factions of the health care workforce in targeted ways, such as promoting interprofessional, team-based care; encouraging practice in community-based settings as well as rural and other underserved areas; training providers to respond to emerging and existing public health threats (e.g., maternal mortality and morbidity) and expanding educational funding for nurses and other allied health professionals. As the nation faces widespread maternity care provider shortages, it is crucial to establish a federal funding stream within existing Public Health Service Act programs that will help the next generation of maternity care providers stay ahead of the increasing health care challenges of our country. H.R. 3849 will authorize federal funding streams under Title VII and Title VIII to help increase the number of midwives available to mothers in the U.S.

ACTION NEEDED:

- ACNM encourages support for H.R. 3849. To add your name to the list of cosponsors please contact Debbie Jessup in Rep. Roybal-Allard's office at Debbie.jessup@mail.house.gov or Anna Breen in Rep. Herrera Beutler's office at anna.breen@mail.house.gov.
- For additional information about the midwifery model of care as practiced by CNMs and CMs contact Amy Kohl at akohl@ACNM.org.