

## **The Midwives for Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services (MOMS) Act Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA)**

The Midwives for MOMS Act is a bill to address the growing maternity care provider shortage, to improve maternity care outcomes for mothers and babies, and to reduce maternity care costs for families and state / federal governments, by expanding educational opportunities for Midwives.

This bill will establish two new funding streams for midwifery education, one in the Title VII Health Professions Training Programs, and one in the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs. Additionally, the bill will address the significant lack of diversity in the maternity care workforce by prioritizing students from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds.

The bill is supported by the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), and the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC)

### **Why the bill is needed**

The United States spends more than double per capita on childbirth than other industrialized countries. Maternity care is a major component of U.S. escalating health care costs:

- Maternity care for mothers and their newborns is the top reason for hospitalization in the US. (AHRQ, Jan13) Combined mother/baby fees for hospitalization (\$111 billion in 2010) far exceeded fees for any other hospital condition in the U.S. (Childbirth Connections, 2019)
- Medicaid is the largest single payer of pregnancy-related services, financing 43% of all U.S. births in 2016. In five states and DC, Medicaid covers more than 60% of all births.(KFF, Mar19)
- Maternity care also accounts for a significant proportion of our Medicaid investment, accounting for 27% of all hospital charges to Medicaid in 2012. (MACPAC, Nov18)

Despite the high costs of maternity care, childbirth continues to carry significant risks for mothers and babies in this country, and the United States' maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity, preterm birth, infant mortality, and low birth weight all remain the highest among high-income nations:

- Approximately two women die every day in the U.S. from pregnancy-related causes, and more than 135 expectant and new mothers a day—50,000 a year—endure dangerous and even life threatening complications that have an adverse effect on their health. (NPR, 2017)
- There are significant disparities in health outcomes. African-American women have nearly a four-time greater risk of dying from pregnancy-related complications than their White counterparts. Disparities in maternal deaths for African-American women have not improved in more than 20 years. (CDC, 2019)
- National preterm birth rates rose in 2016 and 2017 after declining consistently since 2007. The preterm birth rate among black women is 49 percent higher than the rate among all other women, greatly contributing to this increase. The US preterm birth rates are higher than the global average, ranking 54<sup>th</sup> globally. (March of Dimes, 2017, 2012)
- For every five mothers dying in the United States from pregnancy and childbirth, three could have been saved if they had received better medical care. (CDC *Vital Signs*, 2019)

The United States is facing what will become an increasingly severe shortage of trained maternity care providers, including general obstetrician-gynecologists (OB-GYNs), family physicians providing full-scope or even outpatient maternity services, and midwives.

- More than five million women in the United States live in a maternity care desert, an estimated 1,085 counties in the United States have hospitals without services for pregnant women and roughly 150,000 babies are born to women living in counties with no access to maternity care. (MOD, 2018)
- Nearly half the counties in the United States do not have a single ob-gyn and 56 percent are without a certified nurse-midwife or certified midwife. (March of Dimes, 2018)
- The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimates there will be a shortage of up to 8,800 OB-GYNs by 2020, with the shortfall approaching 22,000 by 2050 (ACOG, 2018)

Midwives can mitigate these negative birth outcomes in the United States, but currently we are underutilizing midwives in our maternity care system compared to other developed nations.

- Midwives currently attend less than 10 percent of all births in the United States, compared to countries like Great Britain where midwives deliver half of all babies, and Sweden, Norway and France where midwives oversee the majority of expectant and new mothers. All of these countries have much lower rates of maternal and infant mortality than we do in the US.(ACNM; ProPublica, 2018)
- Over 50 percent of US counties do not have a single nurse midwife or certified midwife. (ACNM)
- Many of the states characterized by poor health outcomes and hostility to midwives also have large black populations, raising the possibility that the greater use of midwives could reduce racial disparities in maternity care. (ProPublica, 2018)

### **Summary of the Legislation**

The Midwives for MOMS Act will increase the numbers of midwives educated in the US and will support the education of a more culturally diverse maternity care workforce.

- In Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, the bill will authorize \$15 million in grants to educate midwives who are trained in accredited midwifery programs that do not sit in schools or nursing, and are eligible to sit for national certification exams.
  - 25% of the funding will be to establish or expand programs of midwifery
  - 50% of the funding will be for student support
  - 25% of the funding will be for preceptor training and support
- In Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, the bill will authorize \$20 million in grants to educate nurse midwives who graduate from accredited nurse-midwifery programs and are eligible to sit for a national certification exam
  - 25% of the funding will be to establish or expand programs of nurse-midwifery
  - 50% of the funding will be for student support
  - 25% of the funding will be for preceptor training and support

The bill will address the significant lack of diversity in the maternity care workforce by:

- Prioritizing midwifery programs that demonstrate a focus on increasing racial and ethnic minority representation in midwifery education
- Targeting students who plan to practice in a health professional shortage area