

October 12, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman, Senate HELP Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.
Senate HELP Committee
Chairman, Subcommittee on Children & Families
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Senate HELP Committee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Children & Families
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, Subcommittee Chairman Casey, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Cassidy:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, is writing to express our strong support for S.2779 the *Taskforce Recommending Improvements for Unaddressed Mental Perinatal & Postpartum Health (TRIUMPH) for New Moms Act*. The bipartisan *TRIUMPH for New Moms Act*, introduced in September by Sen. Hassan (D-NH) and Sen. Tillis (R-NC), will integrate and strategize federal resources to address the maternal mental health crisis. Currently, federal action on maternal mental health is disparate and uncoordinated across agencies and departments. *TRIUMPH* is a no-cost measure to reduce maternal mortality, prevent intergenerational harm, and mitigate impacts to the economy. We request that the bill be brought forward for consideration in the upcoming months.

Maternal mental health conditions, like postpartum depression, are serious illnesses that onset during pregnancy and the one year following childbirth. They are the most common pregnancy and postpartum complication, with 1 in 5 mothers suffering from a maternal mental health condition¹. Despite this impact, 50% of these moms never receive treatment² – and when these illnesses go untreated, they cost the U.S. economy \$14.2 billion each year (or \$32,000 per mother-infant pair) in productivity loss, preterm births, and other health costs³.

Maternal mental health conditions are strongly related to substance use and maternal mortality, and suicide and overdose are the leading contributors to maternal death⁴. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened maternal mental health, with pregnant and new mothers experiencing anxiety and depression at a three to four times higher rate than pre-pandemic.⁵ Maternal mental health disorders have intergenerational effects, and increase the likelihood of preterm birth, low birthweight delivery, and infant

¹ [Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders Program \(MDRBD\) | Maternal and Child Health Bureau \(hrsa.gov\)](https://www.hrsa.gov/maternal-child/health-topics/depression-and-anxiety-disorders/index.html)

² [Maven Maternal Mental Health Fact Sheet 2018.pdf \(mavenclinic.com\)](https://www.mavenclinic.com/maven/maternal-mental-health-fact-sheet-2018.pdf)

³ [Societal Costs of Untreated Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders in the United States \(mathematica.org\)](https://www.mathematica.org/publications/societal-costs-of-untreated-perinatal-mood-and-anxiety-disorders-in-the-united-states)

⁴ [Maternal drug-related death and suicide are leading causes of postpartum death in California - American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology \(ajog.org\)](https://ajog.org/article/S0002-9368(20)30000-0)

⁵ [A cross-national study of factors associated with women's perinatal mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic \(plos.org\)](https://www.plos.org/article/doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0238000)

mortality; impair mother-infant bonding; and lead to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional impacts on the child^{6,7}.

The timely and bipartisan *TRIUMPH for New Moms Act* would coalesce a federal interdepartmental task force across HHS, DOL, DoD, VA, and HUD to address maternal mental health conditions by closing gaps, eliminating duplication, and coordinating federal resources on maternal, child, and maternal mental health. The task force would also integrate maternal mental health into existing maternity care programs and issue strategic guidance to governors for implementation.

As the U.S. maternal mortality rate rises and millions of new moms struggle with postpartum depression, substance use, and other maternal mental health conditions, the nation needs a strategy for this crisis. In breaking down silos and bringing federal actors together, *TRIUMPH* will build that strategy based on best practices, effective programs, and innovative care models. To protect new moms and future generations, we urge the Committee to bring forward bipartisan, common-sense measures like S.2779 the *TRIUMPH for New Moms Act* for consideration this Fall.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom	Anxiety and Depression Association of America
American Art Therapy Association	Association for Ambulatory Healthcare
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy	Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work	Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
American Counseling Association	College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	Confederation of independent Psychoanalytic Societies
American Mental Health Counselors Association	Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
American Nurses Association	Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
American Occupational Therapy Association	Global Alliance for Behavioral Health & Social Justice
American Psychiatric Association	International OCD Foundation
American Psychoanalytic Association	
American Psychological Association	

⁶ [Maternal anxiety, motherâ€™s infant interactions, and infantsâ€™ response to challenge \(psu.edu\)](https://psu.edu/)

⁷ [A Meta-analysis of Depression During Pregnancy and the Risk of Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Intrauterine Growth Restriction \(nih.gov\)](https://nih.gov/)

International Society for Psychiatric Mental
Health Nurses

The Jewish Federations of North America

Kennedy Forum

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent
Health

National Association for Children's Behavioral
Health

National Association for Rural Mental health

National Association of County Behavioral
Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health
Program Directors

National League for Nursing

Postpartum Support International

REDC Consortium

The Trevor Project

Trust for America's Health