

January 27, 2020

The Honorable Terry England  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
245 CAP  
State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Chairman England:

We, the undersigned organizations, are a coalition of concerned Georgians working to improve outcomes in maternal health. We request that provisions be made in the FY 2021 budget to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage of mothers in our state up to one year. Implementation of this policy would be one of many necessary steps to addressing the maternal mortality and morbidity crisis in Georgia.

Data show that Georgia has the worst maternal mortality ratio of any state in the country.<sup>1</sup> Black women in Georgia are 3.3 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women are<sup>2</sup>, and Georgia's own health experts believe that more than half of confirmed pregnancy-related deaths in the state are preventable.<sup>3</sup> Based on the latest report from Georgia's state mandated Maternal Mortality Review Committee, 82% of maternal deaths occurred in the postpartum period, up to one year.<sup>4</sup> Yet, women enrolled in Medicaid for pregnancy lose coverage only 60 days after delivery.

Children born to women who are covered by Medicaid during pregnancy are automatically eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for one year. Unfortunately, this same length of coverage is not extended to the mothers of these children. Extending Medicaid coverage of moms to one year after they deliver will ensure that they have access to critical health care services and demonstrate that Georgia values women's health. This recommendation has been made by both the state's Maternal Mortality Review Committee<sup>5</sup> as well as the General Assembly's own recently convened Special Study Committee on Maternal Mortality, chaired by Representative Sharon Cooper.

We acknowledge the great strides in improving maternal health made by the General Assembly over the past two years, and we urge lawmakers to continue proposing and passing legislation

---

<sup>1</sup> America's Health Ranking, *Public Health Impact: Maternal Mortality (Georgia)*, UNITED HEALTH FOUND. [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/maternal\\_mortality/state/GA](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/maternal_mortality/state/GA) (last visited June 21, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee, *Maternal Mortality Report: 2014*, GA. DEP'T OF PUB. HEALTH 11 (2019), [https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/related\\_files/site\\_page/Maternal%20Mortality%20BookletGeorgia.FINAL\\_hh\\_.pdf](https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/Maternal%20Mortality%20BookletGeorgia.FINAL_hh_.pdf) [hereinafter Ga. Maternal Mortality Review Comm.].

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>4</sup> GA. MMRC, *supra* note 2 at 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> GA. MMRC, *supra* note 2 at 25.

that creates opportunities for women to achieve their optimal standard of maternal health. These opportunities start with access to safe and respectful health care. Please allocate funds for extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage for women up to one year in the FY21 budget.

Sincerely,

Black Mamas Matter Alliance  
Center for Black Women's Wellness  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Citizens for Community Midwives  
Community Midwives National Alliance  
Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project  
Handmaids Coalition of Georgia  
Midtown Assistance Center  
No Safe Seats  
SisterLove  
SisterSong  
SOE Agency  
United Way of Greater Atlanta