



March 30, 2017

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin and Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), I write to strongly support the ***“Improving Access to Maternity Care Act of 2017”*** and thank you for championing this important public health initiative on behalf of women, particularly those in rural and urban areas experiencing shortages of qualified providers.

The goal of this legislation is to identify areas in the U.S. experiencing significant shortages of full scope maternity care professionals, including certified nurse-midwives. Greater information on the shortages of maternity care providers that exist will enable Congress and the Administration to address challenges and focus valuable resources on areas of significant need. ACNM believes expanding access to maternity care professionals in underserved areas can reduce overall maternity care costs in the U.S. by ensuring women have access to necessary prenatal care and delivery options.

In a report issued in June of 2013, the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) highlights that having coverage for maternity services does not guarantee access to care. Access to maternity care professionals is a significant issue in many areas of the country due to the changing demographics of maternity care providers, variation among practice environments, and restructuring, regionalization and closure of many maternity care units.<sup>1</sup>

For millions of women, shortages of maternity care providers can result in long waiting times for appointments and long travel times to prenatal care and birthing sites. Maternity care providers have become particularly prone to workforce challenges due to concerns surrounding professional liability, irregular working hours, declining medical student interest, and increasing sub-specialization by graduating medical residents. These factors have contributed to inadequate access to maternal and reproductive care.

Thank you for your efforts to address these concerns for the women our members serve. Please contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034 x101 or via email at [Patrick@federalgrp.com](mailto:Patrick@federalgrp.com) if you have questions regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kane Low, PhD, CNM, FACNM, FAAN  
President

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<sup>1</sup> MACPAC, “Report to the Congress on Medicaid and CHIP,” June 2013, page 21-22.