



September 24, 2020

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
United States Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hassan and Cassidy,

We write to express our strong support for the Maternal Immunization Enhancement Act. We appreciate your leadership around modernizing and improving maternal immunization rates.

Since 2004, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has issued recommendations on the importance of maternal immunization, and currently recommends that all pregnant women receive the influenza, tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccines. Unfortunately, a recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that "many pregnant women are unvaccinated, and they and their babies continue to be vulnerable to influenza and pertussis infection and potentially serious complications including hospitalization and death."

Pregnant women seeking access to and coverage for vaccines encounter multiple barriers, including lack of information about recommended vaccines, financial hurdles, and technological and logistical obstacles. Additionally, vaccine confidence and hesitancy issues remain a challenge. Your legislation seeks to change this and would help improve access to and utilization of maternal vaccines by ensuring first dollar coverage of vaccines for perinatal women enrolled in Medicaid; adopting the recent prenatal immunization quality measure; and requesting much sought-after data on obstetric patients and providers.

As immunizations are a highly cost-effective form of preventive medicine that help save lives by protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals and families in communities nationwide, it is in our nation's interest to improve immunization coverage rates as a means to improve maternal health outcomes. With several promising new vaccines in the research pipeline for life threatening conditions that could provide important health benefits to pregnant women and their children, now is the time to focus on improving immunization rates in the perinatal population.

Again, thank you for leadership on the Maternal Immunization Enhancement Act. Members of AVAC stand ready to work with you on this, and other important and effective solutions around vaccines.

Sincerely,

American Immunization Registry Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Biondavax pharmaceuticals
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Families Fighting Flu
Immunization Action Coalition
Infectious Diseases Society of America
March of Dimes
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
STChealth
The Gerontological Society of America
Trust for America's Health
Vaccinate Your Family
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease