

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

As you consider the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, we respectfully request that you provide funding for the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression program at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, maternal mental health disorders, such as postpartum depression (PPD), affect 1 in 9 women. The consequences of maternal depression include poor bonding between mother and infant, which can have negative effects on cognitive and social-emotional development of the child. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that every year, more than 400,000 infants are born to mothers who have depression, which makes perinatal depression the most underdiagnosed obstetric complication in the United States.

With hundreds of thousands of new mothers living with PPD across the country, there is a critical need for improved screening and appropriate treatment for pregnant and postpartum women. PPD is treatable with behavioral health interventions and/or pharmacologic therapy, but it is currently underdiagnosed and untreated - nearly 60 percent of women with symptoms do not receive a diagnosis, and 50 percent of women with a diagnosis do not receive any treatment. As maternal suicide exceeds hemorrhage and hypertensive disorders as a cause of maternal mortality, more must be done to support new and expectant mothers.

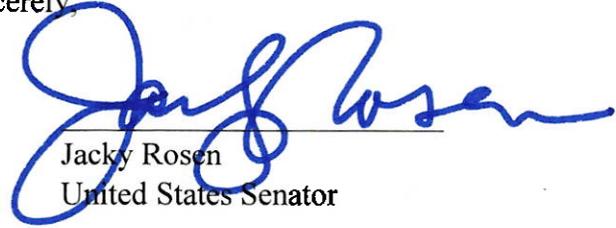
The 21st Century Cures Act established a program for states to create, improve, or maintain their work in screening and providing treatment services for maternal depression. This allows states to develop or build on successful local efforts to provide appropriate training and resources to health care providers regarding perinatal depression screening, treatment, support, and referrals to community-based resources. We are grateful to you for appropriating the fully authorized amount of \$5 million in FY2019. This investment is an important step to address and prevent the impact of PPD on women, their children's growth and development, and their families.

We thank you for all of your work in supporting maternal health and urge you to appropriate funding for the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression program in FY 2020.

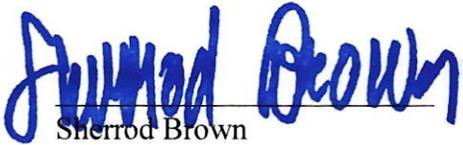
Sincerely,



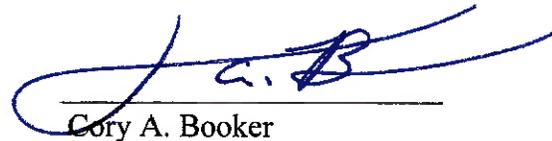
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



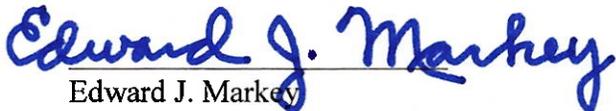
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



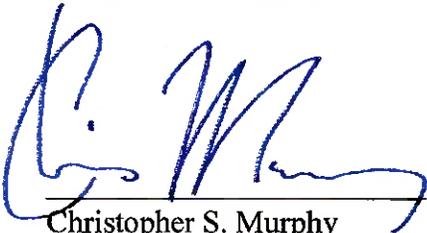
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



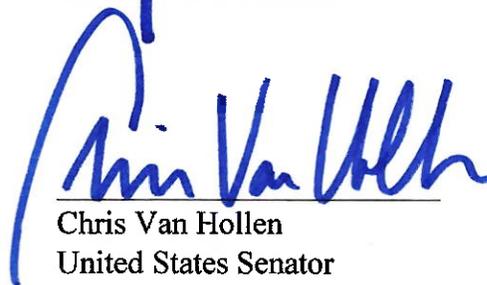
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator