

Public Policy Update

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Maternal Health Bills Signed Into Law

Bipartisan bills signed at the end of 2018 support accessibility to safe and quality maternity care

Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2018 (H.R. 1318) – On December 21, 2018, the President signed H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2018, legislation that Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) has been supportive of since its introduction. The bill was introduced by Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA). Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Sen. Shelley Moore-Capito (R-WV) were the original co-sponsors of the companion bill in the Senate (S.1112). Full bill text is available [here](#).

H.R. 1318 creates a new Maternal Mortality Review Committee program directed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The legislation specifically amends the CDC's Safe Motherhood and Infant Health program by authorizing the creation of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee program and provides \$12 million annually to administer the program in fiscal years 2019-2023. This dedicated funding to support Maternal Mortality Review Committees will truly make a difference in helping the U.S. understand maternal mortality and what interventions can prevent these tragic events in the future.

PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018 (S. 3029) – Also signed into law in late December, the PREEMIE Act was sponsored by Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) in the Senate and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Leonard Lance (R-NJ) in the House. The bill renews the CDC's research and prevention programs focused on preterm births, reauthorizes HRSA's activities aimed at healthy birth outcomes, and updates the Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality's charge to include severe maternal morbidity.

Improving Access to Maternity Care Act (H.R. 315) – Sponsored by Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX), Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), and Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and also signed into law, the bill amends the Public Health Service Act to require HRSA to identify maternity care health professional target areas, which are areas that have a shortage of maternity care health professionals, and also calls for ensuring the necessary health professionals are assigned to those target areas.

With the passage of these three pieces of legislation, our country has made significant progress towards improving maternity and birth outcomes for mothers and their children. NFP believes that this bi-partisan federal support is critical to ensure that every woman has access to safe and quality health care, and we commend Congress for the passage of these bills.

If you have questions or would like more information on this public policy update, please contact Teri Weathers, Director of Federal Government Affairs, at teri.weathers@nursefamilypartnership.org.