

November 19, 2015

The Honorable Dean Heller
U.S. Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heller and Senator Gillibrand:

As organizations dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of women and children, we write to offer our support for S. 2311, the *Bringing Postpartum Depression Out of the Shadows Act of 2015*. We applaud your leadership on an issue of major importance for maternal and child health.

As you know, maternal depression, which includes major and minor depressive episodes that occur during and up to one year following pregnancy, affects one in seven women, making it one of the most common medical complications during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Each year, more than 400,000 infants are born to mothers who are depressed. Postpartum depression can lead to increased costs of medical care, discontinuation of breastfeeding, family dysfunction, and child abuse and neglect, and can adversely affect the early brain development of infants.

S. 2311 would increase much-needed access to screening and treatment for postpartum depression by supporting states and providers. The legislation builds upon successful state and local efforts to develop and implement programs that connect patients with timely and quality screening, care, and treatment for their depression.

Thank you for introducing the *Bringing Postpartum Depression Out of the Shadows Act* to improve the identification and treatment of postpartum depression. The legislation is an important step toward improving the health of women and children. We look forward to working with you actively toward its successful enactment. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Tamar Haro with the American Academy of Pediatrics at 202/ 347-8600 or tharo@aap.org.

Sincerely,

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
First Focus Campaign for Children
March of Dimes Foundation
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Health Law Program
National WIC Association
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Young Invincibles
ZERO TO THREE