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Provider groups urge Congress to pass maternal health bill this year

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A coalition of more than 80 organizations wants Congress to pass a maternal health bill by the end of 2018.

The groups, which include the American Hospital Association and American Medical Association, support legislation passed by the Senate health committee and a discussion draft version in the House that would provide federal funding for states to create maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) to better understand maternal complications and identify potential solutions.

MMRCs, which do not exist in 15 states, assess maternal deaths and identify opportunities for prevention by linking death certificate and birth certificate or fetal death records, as well as accessing data on maternal deaths, such as medical and social records.

"This important legislation is the beginning of a longer-term solution toward eradicating preventable maternal death and improving maternal and infant health in the United States," states a [letter](#) sent to congressional leaders on Wednesday. "The legislation will accelerate progress toward ensuring that every state has a high-functioning process for identifying the causes of maternal mortality and working across communities to implement solutions."



Also See: [Congress seeks better data sharing to trim maternal mortality](#)

The 80-plus organizations support the Maternal Health Accountability Act (S. 1112), as amended, as well as the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2018 (H.R. 1318) sponsored by Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.), Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) and Ryan Costello (R-Penn.).

"Congress is on the cusp of sending legislation to the President's desk that will equip the United States with the tools it needs to tackle this problem and move the country forward in addressing the growing maternal mortality crisis," concludes the letter. "We strongly urge you to bring H.R. 1318/S. 1112 to the House and Senate floor for a full vote before the end of this calendar year."

The U.S. maternal mortality rate more than doubled between 1987 and 2014, according to the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention. In fact, more American women die from pregnancy-related complications than in most other developed countries.

In addition to the AHA and AMA, the letter was signed by the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians & Gynecologists, as well as the American College of Physicians.