

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you develop the FY 2023 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$100 million for the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network (SET-NET) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding would enable SET-NET to scale nationally and serve as the nationwide preparedness and response network the United States needs to protect pregnant individuals and infants from emerging and re-emerging public health threats.

The United States continues to grapple with ongoing public health emergencies that put our most vulnerable populations, including pregnant individuals and infants, at risk.

SET-NET is an innovative data collection system that links maternal exposures during pregnancy to health outcomes for babies. Building on a mom-baby linked data collection approach developed in response to the Zika outbreak, SET-NET leverages existing data sources to enable CDC and health departments to detect the impact of new and emerging health threats on pregnant individuals and their babies. Findings from SET-NET help parents, health care providers, public health professionals, and policymakers take action to save lives, reduce risk, and improve the health of pregnant individuals and infants.

In Fiscal Year 2022, SET-NET provided support to 31 state, local, and territorial health departments to monitor the impact on pregnant individuals and their babies of exposure to Zika, syphilis, hepatitis C, or COVID-19. With sufficient funding, SET-NET could expand to support 64 state, local, and territorial health departments as they collect, analyze, and report data on additional existing and emerging infectious disease threats to pregnant individuals and their babies and broaden the scope of SET-NET to examine environmental hazards like lead or perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). A truly national SET-NET would

increase the racial, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity of data available on the impacts on women, infants, and children of exposures during pregnancy. With additional resources, SET-NET could also support academic institutions and clinical networks to conduct mother-baby longitudinal cohort studies to examine the risks, benefits, and adoption of prevention and treatment strategies for specific health threats.

As a result of the public health data infrastructure built by SET-NET, and with some emergency COVID funding, funded sites were able to rapidly adapt their surveillance systems to collect data to answer questions about the health effects of COVID-19 exposure on pregnant individuals and their babies. Published findings from SET-NET data in 2020 showed that pregnant individuals with COVID-19 may be at increased risk of having a preterm infant compared to pregnant individuals without COVID-19. Later published findings of SET-NET data in 2021 identified risk factors for pregnant individuals who may experience more severe illness. These findings underscored the need for infection prevention and supported a recommendation of vaccination during pregnancy. SET-NET data continues to inform our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 infection during pregnancy.

Investing in this sustainable framework for rapid, evidence-based data collection can ensure that the United States is prepared to monitor and address the unique health impacts on pregnant individuals and infants during public health emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to provide **\$100 million for SET-NET in Fiscal Year 2023** to fully fund a national preparedness and response network focused on pregnant individuals and infants.

Sincerely,



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



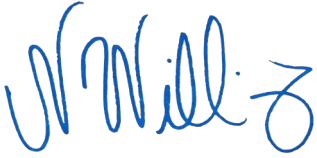
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Member of Congress



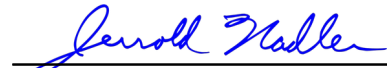
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Marilyn Strickland
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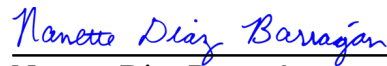
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Member of Congress



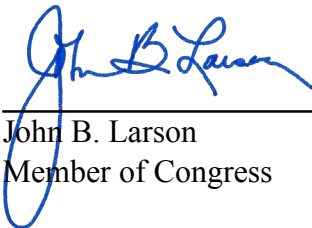
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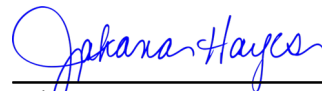
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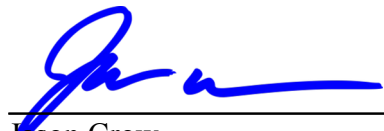
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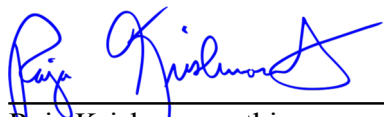
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