

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education & Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY2023) 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 families, 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 existing and emerging threats to pregnant individuals and their babies and broaden the scope of SET-NET to examine environmental hazards such as lead or perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The public health data infrastructure and surveillance systems established under SET-NET has enabled rapid data collection on the health impact of COVID-19 on pregnant individuals and their babies throughout the pandemic. Published findings from SET-NET data in 2020 showed that pregnant people with COVID-19 may be at increased risk of having a preterm infant compared to pregnant people 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. Moving forward, it is critical that Congress continue to invest in SET-NET entities to support rapid data collection and a deeper understanding of the impact of COVID-19 infection during pregnancy.

Investing in this sustainable framework for rapid, evidence-based data collection will ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the unique needs of 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,

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan

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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

/s/ Maria Cantwell

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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

/s/ Gary Peters

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Gary Peters  
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema

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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal

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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith

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Tina Smith  
United States Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth

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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden

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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar

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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein

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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

/s/ Alex Padilla

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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator