



September 15, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

The undersigned organizations encourage you to include in the Finance Committee's health care reform bill provisions that extend impressive health care quality improvement measures of CHIPRA to maternity and adult health services under Medicaid and CHIP. Through the Engel-Capps Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute, "Section 1726, Quality Measures for Maternity and Adult Health Services under Medicaid and CHIP," HR 3200 extends basic CHIPRA quality improvement measures to these populations.

Through categorical coverage of services for childbearing women and newborns, Medicaid now pays for about 43% of 4.3 million births nationally in the U.S. There are many clear opportunities to greatly improve the quality of these services and the health of women and newborns. Overuse of many maternity interventions, as identified by the National Priorities Partnership, and broad unwarranted practice variation are special concerns. However, current Medicaid maternity care quality improvement efforts are meager, where they exist at all. Development of quality measures for this large, vulnerable population and a format for reporting results to the relevant stakeholders would help realize this potential for improvement, eliminate waste, and increase the value of taxpayers' considerable investments.

Similarly, Medicaid now covers many services for other adults and may expand these commitments through health care reform legislation. The identification, development, and reporting of priority measures for other adult populations is also essential to the health care reform imperatives of improved quality, outcomes, and value.

As you work through the challenges of health care reform, we encourage you to include in the Finance Committee's bill a robust program for addressing the priority of performance measurement and reporting for maternity services and for adults covered under Medicaid and CHIP.

If you have any questions please contact Maureen Corry, Executive Director, Childbirth Connection, at 917 439-7201.

Sincerely,

Childbirth Connection

The American College of Nurse-Midwives

Coalition for Improving Maternity Services

National Women's Health Network

Our Bodies Ourselves

Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need