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Congresswomen Adams and Underwood Introduce the CARE for Families Act

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congresswomen Adams and Underwood Introduce the CARE for Families Act

WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (IL-14), founders and co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, introduced the Community Access to Resources and Education (CARE) for Families Act with Committee on Education and Labor Chairman Bobby Scott (VA-3). The CARE for Families Act will address maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD-5), a member of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, expressed strong support for the bill today.

The rate of maternal mortality in the United States has more than doubled since 1987, and the rate of maternal morbidity has increased by 75 percent in the past decade. Meanwhile, the infant mortality rate – 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live births – is higher than most developed nations. Maternal health outcomes in America are even worse for Black women, who are nearly four times more likely than white women—and more than twice as likely as women of other races—to die from preventable, pregnancy-related complications.

The CARE for Families Act would make key investments in community health partnerships led by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and would address maternal and infant mortality by improving women and children’s access to quality nutrition and health care services throughout pregnancy and after giving birth.

“We are facing a maternal health crisis in this country, and it disproportionately affects Black women. It is imperative that we ensure all women have equal access to quality pre- and post-natal nutrition and care,” **said Congresswoman Alma Adams.** “The CARE for Families Act will strengthen community health partnerships and build upon WIC’s success in providing nutrition and health care for women and children to ensure families can not only survive but thrive.”

“As a nurse, I understand that a holistic approach to health and well-being is essential to addressing the maternal mortality crisis, including pre- and post-natal nutrition to help new mothers and babies maintain health during pregnancy and the critical months following birth. I’m proud to introduce the CARE for Families Act, along with my fellow co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, which will make key investments in local nutrition services to help improve infant and maternal outcomes,” **said**

Congresswoman Lauren Underwood.

“Congress can and ought to do more to protect the health of new mothers and mothers-to-be, particularly women of color and those living in poverty,” **said Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.** “That’s why legislation like the CARE for Families Act is so important and why the hard work of Rep. Adams, Rep. Underwood, and Chairman Scott is so critical. I am deeply concerned by the rising maternal mortality rate, and I am committed to working with my colleagues to take action to promote maternal and prenatal health care and nutrition access across the country.”

“As the maternal mortality rate in the United States continues to grow, particularly for Black mothers, it is our responsibility to ensure mothers and their children have access to the quality health services and nutrition they need. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has a proven track record of reducing infant mortality and improving the nutritional status and health of pregnant women,” **said Chairman Bobby Scott, Committee on Education and Labor.** “By providing additional support to WIC, the Community Access, Resources, and Education for Families (CARE for Families) Act helps support positive health outcomes for families by strengthening resources for women before, during, and after pregnancy. I am thankful for the leadership of Congresswoman Adams and Congresswoman Underwood on this critical issue.”

Specifically, this vital legislation would create a grant program for local WIC agencies and clinics for community partnerships aimed at:

- Increasing the involvement of WIC staff in the community;
- Improving health outcomes by better connecting WIC to community health providers like OB/GYNS, advance practice nurses and pediatricians;
- Facilitating referrals between WIC and health care providers; and
- Improving the coordination, quality, and cost effectiveness of health care services.

The CARE for Families Act has been endorsed by: 1,000 Days, the Academy of Nutrition of Dietetics, Advocates for Better Children’s Diets, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Heart Association, the American Public Health Association, the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Child Care Aware of America, Children’s Dental Health Project, Children’s HealthWatch, the Coalition on Human Needs, the First Focus Campaign for Children, the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, March of Dimes, MomsRising, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, the National WIC Association, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, the Nurse-Family Partnership, Share Our Strength – No Kid Hungry, the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior, Trust for America’s Health, the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, ZERO TO THREE.

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