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Congresswomen Adams and Underwood Hold Black Maternal Health Caucus Stakeholder Summit

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Congresswomen Adams and Underwood Hold Black Maternal Health Caucus Stakeholder Summit

Washington, DC – Congresswomen Alma Adams (NC -12) and Lauren Underwood (IL-14), founders and co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, convened 32 of the leading organizations working to address the Black maternal health crisis for the Caucus’ first- ever stakeholder summit yesterday.

The summit served as a listening session for Members of the Black Maternal Health Caucus to hear insights from a diverse group of stakeholders on their advocacy efforts and their recommendations for the Caucus.

Black women are nearly four times more likely than white women – and more than twice as likely as women on other races – to die from preventable, pregnancy-related complications. Black women also experience higher rates of maternal complications and infant mortality.

The bipartisan Black Maternal Health Caucus, now 75 members strong, aims to raise awareness within Congress to establish Black maternal health as a national priority, and explore and advocate for effective, evidence-based, culturally-competent policies and best practices for health outcomes for Black mothers.

“The summit provided an invaluable opportunity to hear from stakeholders about what we as a Caucus, and a Congress, can do to address bias and racism in the health care system, and increase access to quality health care for Black women,” **said Congresswoman Adams**. “This is more than a public health crisis. This is a human rights issue that demands immediate attention. I look forward to continuing to work with these dedicated advocates to elevate black maternal health as a national priority.”

“The summit was an important opportunity for me and other Members to learn more about the incredible work stakeholders are doing to achieve optimal birth outcomes for more Black women and their families, and what Congress can do to support this work and remove barriers to success. We have so much work to do to solve this crisis and I’m thrilled so many thoughtful leaders and advocates are engaged, willing, and ready to join the Caucus in this charge,” **said Congresswoman Underwood**.

“I’m proud to stand with Reps. Adams, Underwood, and other members of the Black Maternal Health Caucus and to have participated in the summit,” **said Majority Leader Steny Hoyer**. “It is critical that

the federal government, the states, and community organizations partner to end disparities in health care outcomes for African American mothers and children, including addressing the implicit bias and prejudice that are factors in driving these disparities. I look forward to working in Congress to achieve that goal.”

“America’s growing maternal mortality rate is a national crisis. How is it that it’s more dangerous to have a baby in 2019 than it was in 1985? How is it that black mothers in Illinois are dying at six times the rate of white Americans,” **Congresswoman Robin Kelly implored.** “The summit must be a call to immediate action to saves mothers’ lives. We already know what’s working at different places around the country, it’s time to bring these programs together in a national effort because growing your family shouldn’t cost you your life.”

“For the past 30 years, the world has seen a decline in the number of women dying from childbirth with the exception of one country-- the United States. African-American women are disproportionately impacted by maternal mortality at a rate four times higher than white women,” **said Congresswoman Lawrence.** “As a Co-Chair of the Democratic Women’s Caucus, I proudly stand with my sisters in this struggle to right this terrible wrong, and the summit is a step in the right direction. It is our solemn duty to institute policies and programs to save the lives of all women who wish to bear a child.”


The following Members of Congress participated in the stakeholder summit: Reps. Alma Adams, Lauren Underwood, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Robin Kelly, Democratic Women’s Caucus Co-Chair Brenda Lawrence, Ilhan Omar, Steven Horsford, Barbara Lee, Yvette Clarke, Donna Shalala, Sheila Jackson Lee

The following organizations participated in the stakeholder summit: Center for American Progress, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Black Women’s Health Imperative, Moms Rising, In Our Own Voice, Mamatoto Village, Inc, 1,000 Days, National Association to Advance Black Birth, Center for Reproductive Rights, National Health Law Program, National Women’s Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Commonsense Childbirth, Inc. and the National Perinatal Task Force, Ancient Song Doula Services, March for Moms, National Birth Equity Collaborative, SisterSong, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Futures Without Violence, Every Mother Counts, National Partnership for Women & Families, March of Dimes, The Joint Commission, American Academy of Nursing, Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, American Medical Association, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, National Medical Association

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