

Adams, Scott Introduce CARE for Families Act During Black Maternal Health Week



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WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, and House Committee on Education & Labor Chairman Bobby Scott (VA-03) introduced the Community Access to Resources and Education (CARE) for Families Act today. The CARE for Families Act will help improve maternal and infant health outcomes by strengthening partnerships between health care providers and local nutrition services.

A copy of the bill is available here.

"We have an unacceptable maternal health crisis in this country that disproportionately impacts Black women and their babies. The data shows us that addressing social determinants of health, such as nutrition, is a key intervention for reducing disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. All women and pregnant persons must have equal access to quality prenatal and postpartum nutrition and health care," **said Congresswoman Alma Adams.** "The CARE for Families Act will strengthen community health partnerships and build upon WIC's success in providing quality nutrition, information, and health care services for pregnant women and children to ensure families can not only survive but thrive. I am proud to re-introduce this bill during Black Maternal Health Week, because our mamas can't wait."

"It is essential that we confront the maternal mortality crisis, which has only worsened during the pandemic. Providing access to quality health services and

nutrition for vulnerable mothers and their children is both a moral imperative and an investment in the future of our communities. The CARES for Families Act will build up the digital infrastructure of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which has a proven track record of reducing infant mortality and improving the health and well-being of pregnant women," **said Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03), Committee on Education and Labor.**

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.

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.

In order to increase better coordination of patient care, the bill also directs USDA to establish a Health Information Exchange initiative to improve communication between State agencies and medical providers with regards to participant health

information related to services provided.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. is serving her fourth full term in Congress. She represents the 12th District of North Carolina, which includes parts of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In 2018, she introduced the first Black Maternal Health Week resolution with then-Senator **Kamala Harris**. In 2019, she co-founded the Black Maternal Health Caucus with **Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)**. In March 2020, Adams, along with Harris and Underwood, introduced the ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*** for the first time, and in February 2021 reintroduced an expanded version of the package with **Senator Cory Booker**. Adams is a mother of two and a grandmother of four.

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