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April 19, 2022

State of Michigan House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

With a singular focus of improving maternal and infant outcomes in Michigan, various groups have come together to examine the vexing increases in our state's mortality and morbidity rates. These groups concerned about the lack of funding and access to care are from urban and rural communities across the state; and are comprised of physicians, nurses, midwives, employers, community health workers, advocates, and other health care professionals – all working toward the common goal of improving maternal and infant health in Michigan.

The Economic Alliance for Michigan (EAM) is comprised of businesses and labor organizations that provides health coverage to over 1.0 million Michiganders. The EAM focuses on initiatives that will ensure adequate access and higher quality of care for all. The state can reduce the death rates of mothers and infants by providing additional support for prenatal and postnatal care, paving the way for the best start to an infant's life.

Currently, infant death rates in Michigan are above the national average primarily because of the disproportionately poor outcomes for women and babies of color. The executive recommendations for the state's FY23 budget represent timely opportunities to invest in several strategies and approaches that we believe have the potential to make a positive difference in pregnancy, postpartum and infant health:

- \$4.2 million for expansion of centering pregnancy sites around the state. *CenteringPregnancy® is an evidence-based model of group healthcare that combines a health assessment with interactive learning and community building to support positive health behaviors, drive better health outcomes, reduce racial disparities, and address the complex social determinants of health.¹ Current Michigan sites are reporting higher rates of healthy weight, full-term babies.²*
- \$10 million total (\$5 million GF with Medicaid match) to create an incentive pool for Medicaid health plans to impact health of pregnant or child beneficiaries. Payments proposed to be made contingent upon meeting established outcome measures. *Financial incentives for health plans to implement new approaches present an opportunity to utilize existing insurance structures and, if focused on access to care and supports as well as the quality of those services, improve outcomes.³*

Furthermore, there are community-based strategies that work alongside necessary medical interventions to address the needs during pregnancy and in the first year of life. Doulas have proven to be safe and effective with potential to prevent costly complications and perinatal health disparities, but they remain under-utilized in Michigan.⁴ Supporting doula training will help increase access to care throughout the state.



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We support the Governor's recommendation for \$1.4 million GF in the FY23 Executive Budget for Department of Health and Human Services budget proposal to increase access to doulas, and we ask that you include the centering pregnancy expansion and the health plans incentive pool as you work to finalize the FY23 state budget.

Sincerely,

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References

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2. Aligning Value-Based Payment with the Centering- Pregnancy® Group Prenatal Care model. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi01diwo7LtAhUCAp0JH-bYgA9QQFjAAegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.centeringhealthcare.org%2Fuploads%2Fdownloads%2FAligning-Value-Based-Payment-with-CenteringPregnan-cy.pdf&usg=AOvVaw38HZX6S2PW8p2JC-oxttj0>
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