



Eating Disorders Coalition Submits Maternal Health Outcome Comments to Senate Committee on Finance

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 6, 2020) – Last month, the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action responded to a Request for Information (RFI) from the Senate Committee on Finance to submit data, findings, factors, and gaps in health insurance coverage contributing to poor maternal health outcomes in the United States. The EDC’s comments will be considered by the Committee as a maternal health legislative package is under development. A copy of the comment submission can be read [here](#).

The comment submission addresses the unique mental health challenges faced by new and expectant mothers. Maternal mental health (MMH) disorders are the most commonly seen complication of pregnancy in the country. Approximately 7.5% of pregnant women affected by an eating disorder are at increased risk of depressive symptoms during the course of their pregnancy compared to women unaffected by an eating disorder. The submission also reports that the pregnancy and postpartum periods are also high-risk periods for the reemergence or worsening of disordered eating and body image concerns.

Mothers are often unable to access coverage for the mental healthcare they require, despite the fact that nearly half of new and expectant mothers living in poverty will experience a MMH disorder during their pregnancy or in the first year after giving birth. Medicare does not provide coverage for eating disorders or any mental illness at the intensive outpatient level (IOP) of care and does not cover residential treatment or outpatient medical nutrition therapy for eating disorders, which represent major gaps in coverage for beneficiaries eligible for both Medicare and Social Security Disability Income.

Without access, coverage, and treatment for MMH disorders, disparities in maternal health outcomes will continue to persist. It is incumbent upon the U.S. to deliver better results for mothers and families, and ensuring comprehensive coverage for critical levels of care and services for high-need populations is a great place to start.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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