



TO: House Committee on Health Care
FR: Grayson Dempsey, Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon
DA: February 9, 2018
RE: In support of HB 4133

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the 20,000 members of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, we respectfully request your support for House Bill 4133. We believe that all women must be able to access a full spectrum of reproductive and maternal health services in order for all families in Oregon to thrive.

We applaud Representative Keny-Guyer's efforts to establish a Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) within the Oregon Health Authority to study and review maternal death cases in Oregon. We believe we must take a proactive approach to prevention and support policies with proven outcomes that support healthy pregnancies.

Our organization has worked to establish proactive and routine pregnancy intention screening with our One Key Question® initiative, now being used by over thirty health centers and direct service providers across the state. We insisted that the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391) included a full spectrum of reproductive health services, specifically ensuring that postpartum care, contraception, and abortion care were covered benefits for those who had previously been ineligible for Medicaid due to citizenship status. We sit as a consumer advocate on the Health Plan Quality Metrics Committee where we have been vocal about the need to include Maternal and Child Health measures.

Looking at the data, it is apparent that this review committee is urgently needed. Between 1990 and 2013, the maternal mortality ratio in the U.S. more than doubled¹. More women die in the U.S. from pregnancy-related complications than any other developed country in the world. We find it even more troubling that these rates are higher among certain populations, including African American women, who are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications², and people in rural areas of the U.S., who are 64% more likely. We absolutely must work to address such disparities in Oregon.

With thorough examination of cases of maternal mortality and morbidity in Oregon, we can begin to identify solutions to this increasingly critical issue. On behalf of all our families, we hope that you will join us in our support for HB 4133.

Sincerely,

Grayson Dempsey

¹ Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2013. Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank and the United Nations Population Division. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2014. Available from: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2013/en/> [cited 2014 Jul 18].

² ii Amnesty International, Deadly Delivery: The Maternal Health Care Crisis in the USA, London: Amnesty International, 2010.