

July 1, 2009

The Honorable Robert Menendez
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

The undersigned organizations thank you for introducing S. 1303, the Women's Medical Home Demonstration Act. As you know, this important legislation will allow us to test the medical home concept in the context of women's unique health care needs. Doing so will help determine if this practice innovation can improve the health outcomes for women in the United States and reduce duplicate and inappropriate utilization of services.

The medical home is rooted in the principle that increasing health care access, patient-provider communication, and collaborative care is fundamental to improving patients' health. This compelling shift in health care delivery renews a focus on achieving greater use of preventive care, improving adherence to medication instructions, facilitating better recognition of medical problems, and increasing early intervention and care coordination across the provider spectrum and practice settings.

Unfortunately, none of the medical home demonstration initiatives established by the federal government, States, or private payers have specifically addressed women's unique health issues. At the same time, the intensity and volume of services associated with women's health care delivery—including routine preventative care, pregnancy, menopause, and gynecologic and breast cancer care—provide a compelling area within which to pilot-test a women's medical home.

For women of childbearing age, the majority of essential screenings, preventive care, and treatment take place in the context of a reproductive health care visit. Consequently, many women consider their OB/GYNs and other women's health providers, such as advance practice nurses, to be their principle point of care and rely on direct access to them. A patient's initial contact with her women's health provider typically begins a long-term relationship with continuity of care from adolescence through the reproductive years and pregnancy, to menopause and beyond. It is essential that women's health providers are supported in this role, and the Women's Medical Home Demonstration Act goes a long way towards establishing a medical home that works best for women.

Again, the undersigned organizations thank you for your leadership in championing the Women's Medical Home Demonstration Act. This concept holds great promise for reaching the shared goal of helping American women grow-up healthy, stay healthy, and age well. We are ready to work with you to ensure swift passage of this important legislation within the broader context of health care reform.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Centering Healthcare Institute
March of Dimes
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National League of Nursing
Our Bodies Ourselves
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
Society for Women's Health Research