According to maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) that examine pregnancy-related deaths in their respective states, “mental health conditions are one of the leading causes of pregnancy-related death.”¹ MMRCs have also been assessing substance use disorder as a contributing factor in maternal deaths, recognizing the overall national trend of drug overdose deaths tripling from 1999-2014.²

These challenges are most acute for low-income and minority families: according to the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), more than half of poor infants live with a mother who has some level of depressive symptoms.³ Research from the Center for American Progress found that maternal mental health issues among Black women “are largely underreported and symptoms often go unaddressed.”⁴

The Moms MATTER Act will address critical maternal mental and behavioral health care issues, including substance use disorders, with a particular focus on minority women. The bill also promotes innovative programs that have already developed a strong evidence base in improving outcomes for women throughout their pregnancies and up to one year postpartum.

The Moms MATTER Act will:

1. Establish a Maternal Mental and Behavioral Health Task Force to improve mental and behavioral health outcomes for women throughout pregnancy and up to one year postpartum.

2. Establish grant programs to promote innovative approaches to improving maternal health outcomes with a particular focus on maternal mental health and substance use disorder for minority women, including:
   - Group prenatal and postpartum care models
   - Collaborative maternity care models
   - Clinics offering wraparound services to women with substance use disorders
   - Programs at freestanding birth centers
   - Programs such as phone hotlines to connect maternity care providers with mental and behavioral health specialists.

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¹ CDC Foundation: Report from Nine Maternal Mortality Review Committees
² CDC Foundation: Report from Nine Maternal Mortality Review Committees
³ CLASP: Maternal Depression and Young Adult Mental Health
⁴ Center for American Progress: Exploring African American’ High Maternal and Infant Death Rates
The Moms MATTER Act is led by Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy, III. The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Lauren Underwood, John Katko, Billy Long, Alma S. Adams, and Mary Gay Scanlon.

The Moms MATTER Act is endorsed by more than 50 organizations, including the:

- Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- American Psychological Association
- Mental Health America
- Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
- NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
- National Birth Equity Collaborative
- Ancient Song Doula Services
- Mamatoto Village Inc
- National Perinatal Task Force
- Commonsense Childbirth
- Every Mother Counts
- 1,000 Days
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- Black Women’s Health Imperative
- American Public Health Association
- MomsRising
- National WIC Association
- Families USA
- National Association of Certified Professional Midwives
- America’s Essential Hospitals
- American Association of Birth Centers
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- American College of Physicians
- Mom Congress
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- EverThrive Illinois
- National Health Law Program
- HealthConnect One
- NARAL Pro-Choice America
- Society for Public Health Education
- Community Catalyst
- Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and more.

For more information or to cosponsor the bill, contact Jack DiMatteo in Rep. Underwood’s office at Jack.DiMatteo@mail.house.gov or Naomi Plasky in Rep. Kennedy’s office at Naomi.Plasky@mail.house.gov.