

June 20, 2017

The Honorable Tom Price, MD
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Price:

As members of the Steering Committee of the Coalition to Advance Maternal Therapeutics (CAMT), a coalition of organizations dedicated to improving information on medications and research during pregnancy and breastfeeding, we are writing regarding the implementation of Sec. 2041 of the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255). Specifically, we ask that you quickly approve a slate of federal agency and public members of this important task force.

As you are aware, Sec. 2041 creates the Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women at HHS to address gaps in knowledge and research regarding safe and effective therapies for pregnant and lactating women. We are pleased with the progress thus far, with the announcement of the August 21 and 22 first meeting of the task force, and look forward optimistically to the meeting's agenda and discussion. Because this first meeting is fast approaching, it is essential that the task force members be appointed and approved as soon as possible.

We strongly believe that this task force will begin a crucial dialogue and create a framework by which we, as stakeholder organizations with an interest in caring for and supporting pregnant and lactating women, can better inform our patient populations and constituencies about the use of medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

With nearly four million women giving birth each year and more than three million breastfeeding, we know that nearly all of these women will take a medication or receive a vaccine during this time. However, we do not know enough about the effects of most drugs on a woman and her pregnancy, or the ways in which pregnancy may alter the uptake, metabolism and potency or efficacy of medications. As more women with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, depression and asthma are becoming pregnant, safe and effective medications to manage these ongoing conditions throughout their pregnancy and beyond are needed.

We are committed to ensuring that the work of this task force is implemented in a meaningful way, and we urge you to swiftly approve a slate of task force members. We stand ready to assist and participate in its progress. We look forward to continuing this important work. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Schubert with the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine at kschubert@smfm.org or (202) 517-6122 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
March of Dimes
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine