



July 26, 2019

Michael Warren, MD, MPH, FAAP  
Maternal and Child Health Bureau  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
Room 18W37  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: The Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality (SACIM)

Dear Dr. Warren,

I am writing this letter as a representative of The Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses or AWHONN. As an organization that represents 350,000 nurses who are clinically active in hospitals, perinatal facilities, and Health Centers, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), we feel strongly that the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality (SACIM) should continue the valuable work of decreasing infant mortality. In my state as well as nationally, we continue to have a persistent problem with high rates of infant mortality. We are concerned that the recent executive order directing cabinet secretaries to terminate at least one third of their advisory committee may result in termination of SACIM.

Since 1991, SACIM has been actively involved in decreasing rates of infant mortality. Interventions supported by SACIM have made significant improvements in premature births, the health of mothers and infants and inequities in health care that result in infant deaths. More recently, SACIM has been promoting shared knowledge of historical lessons learned about infant mortality in the United States, including persistent racial and other inequities. SACIM is also involved in working collaboratively with strategic partners and stakeholders in the development and advancement of recommendations to address key maternal and infant health issues. Even with improvements made in decreasing infant mortality, the United States still has higher rates of infant mortality and maternal mortality than many developed countries. We are also experiencing unacceptable disparities in infant and maternal deaths in women of color. SACIM continues to be vital to reducing infant and maternal deaths in the United States.

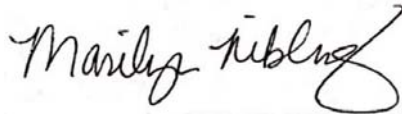
In my work as a neonatal nurse practitioner, I see fetal and neonatal deaths all too often. Preventive strategies need to be shared and disseminated amongst all of our states. Devising upstream approaches utilizing population health strategies should be a priority for our country and should be supported through continued efforts from SACIM. The interconnectedness of maternal health with birth outcomes is currently being addressed by SACIM. It is important that

this critical work continue to prevent needless infant deaths. Dissolving this committee would prove to be a setback to vital work being done.

Congress recently affirmed the role of SACIM through the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early (PREEMIE) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-328) in December 2018. The PREEMIE ACT extension expanded the role of the SACIM to include maternal mortality and morbidity and requires SACIM to submit a report on its activities to Congress every two years.

It has been often said that infant mortality is a measure of societal well-being or of a just society. We need to continue to support SACIM to decrease both infant and maternal mortality. If we can be of any further assistance, please contact AWHONN Government Affairs Director Seth Chase at [schase@awhonn.org](mailto:schase@awhonn.org) or 202-261-2427.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marilyn Nibling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Marilyn Nibling DNP, RN, PNP-BC, NNP-BC  
Chair, Public Policy Committee