

## TL12 – VISIBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND COMMUNICATION

### NURSE ADVOCACY TO CONGRESS: PROMOTING HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND INFANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

*Provide an example, with supporting evidence, of a nurse's(s') advocacy for individual or community health promotion at an external forum where decisions impacting healthcare are made.*

#### **American Nurses Association**

The NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center (NYP/Columbia) Department of Nursing encourages nurses to join professional nursing organizations and advocate for patients and nurses at local, state, and federal levels. Uvannie Enriquez, MPA, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, Magnet Program Director, is a member of the American Nurses Association (ANA) and a healthcare advocate. According to the American Nurses Association website (2020), "The American Nurses Association (ANA) works to advance the nursing profession and improve health and health care for all. One of the primary ways we achieve this is by advocating on behalf of registered nurses at the top levels of government as policies are conceived, debated, and implemented." (Advocacy-ANA, 2020). [TL12.1—ANA Advocacy Webpage](#)

#### **Nurse Advocacy for the Momnibus Act**

The United States has a high maternal mortality rate compared to other developed countries and the rates have continued to rise in recent years (National Center for Health Statistics, 2023). The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, also known as the Momnibus Act, introduced to the House of Representatives in 2021, has yet to become law in its entirety (only one out of the 13 bills in the act has passed). The Momnibus Act addresses existing racial disparities related to infant and maternal mortality rates. Black maternal mortality rates were 2.6 times higher than for white women, but all races have had increased maternal mortality rates in the United States in recent years (National Center for Health Statistics, 2023). Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asian American

Pacific Islanders (AAPI) also have disproportionately high maternal mortality rates (Advocacy- ANA, 2020).

When Ms. Enriquez learned of the Momnibus Act in August 2023 via the ANA RNAction Center, she strongly supported it as an Asian American mother and as a nurse. She was passionate about activating her voice as a nurse to promote access to health care/health services for vulnerable populations and to reduce healthcare disparities. With the ability to endorse ANA's advocacy efforts to congress through the ANA's Action Center, she joined the call for action and emailed her local officials on August 11, 2023, to encourage their support of the Momnibus Act. In the ANA letter, Ms. Enriquez applied the advocacy tools promoted by her professional nursing organization, communicating her advocacy for the Momnibus Act to U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, 12<sup>th</sup> District of New York, and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, New York and Charles Schumer, by writing the following:

*As a nurse and your constituent, I am urging you to support the Black Maternal Health Act or, Momnibus!*

*Not only does the United States suffer from one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, but it is also the only country in the world where maternal mortality rates are actually rising. Maternal mortality rates for Black and Native Americans are even higher at two to four times greater than that of their white counterparts. Hispanic and AAPI people also experience elevated rates of maternal morbidity.*

*The Momnibus includes 12 individual bills that:*

- *Make critical investments in social determinants of health;*
- *Extend WIC eligibility in the postpartum and breastfeeding periods;*
- *Provide funding to community-based organizations,*
- *Increase funding for programs to improve maternal health care for veterans;*
- *Grow and diversify the perinatal workforce;*
- *Improve data collection processes and quality measures;*
- *Support moms with maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders;*
- *Improve maternal health care and support for incarcerated moms;*
- *Invest in digital tools to improve maternal health outcomes in underserved areas;*

- *Promote innovative payment models;*
- *Invest in federal programs to address maternal and infant health risks during public health emergencies;*
- *Invest in community-based initiatives to reduce levels of and exposure to climate change-related risks for moms and babies;*
- *Promote maternal vaccinations to protect the health of moms and babies.*

*We know this legislation will save lives. On behalf of your constituents, and in honor of mothers, babies, and families in need of care, please support the Momnibus!*

#### [TL12.2—Advocacy Letter to Congress](#)

Following the letter sent via external electronic mail to Congress on August 11, 2023, Ms. Enriquez received a thank you email from the ANA on August 11, 2023, for reaching out to her elected officials and encouraged her to share the Momnibus Act with family and friends. [TL12.3—ANA Thank You Email](#) Ms. Enriquez also received an email reply from Senator Gillibrand acknowledging its receipt on August 11, 2023. On November 27, 2023, Ms. Enriquez received replies from both Senator Gillibrand and Senator Schumer. Senator Gillibrand wrote that she was one of the original co-founders of the Act and continues to support its efforts. Senator Schumer also supports the Momnibus Act and noted it was reintroduced in May of 2023 and that significant progress in maternal health efforts are being made. [TL12.4—Senators Email Responses](#)

Inspired by the email, on August 30, 2023, Ms. Enriquez shared the importance of the Momnibus Act with family and friends on social media, posting the opportunity for others to join in her advocacy efforts when she posted the call for action on Facebook.

#### [TL12.5—Facebook Post to Support Momnibus](#)

### **References**

*Advocacy - American Nurses Association.* ANA. (2020, April 27).

<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/advocacy/>

National Center for Health Statistics. (2023, March). *Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2021.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



# Federal Advocacy

Pages in this section



Accessed August 2023

The American Nurses Association (ANA) works to advance the nursing profession and improve health and health care for all. One of the primary ways we achieve this is by advocating on behalf of registered nurses at the top levels of government as policies are conceived, debated, and implemented.

ANA amplifies nurses' voices by lobbying Congress and executive agencies, and by offering information and tools that empower nurses to share their perspective and expertise directly with policymakers.

## In Congress

Every day ANA advocates on your behalf, educating and forging relationships with members of Congress and congressional staff on both sides of the aisle, and lobbying to advance ANA's policy agenda in support of nurses and patients.

## Agencies & Regulatory Affairs

When Congress passes laws, they rarely contain enough specific language to guide their implementation completely. It is the responsibility of the federal administrative agencies to fill in the details of new or amended laws with rules and regulations – and it is important that the voice of U.S. nurses is heard during this process. ANA monitors federal agencies as they issue regulations and implementation of federal laws.

[SEE OUR LETTERS TO CONGRESS AND AGENCIES](#)

## Get Involved

Visit the online home of our federal advocacy program at [RNAction](#), run by the ANA Department of Government Affairs (GOVA). Through this digital hub, you will find out exactly what ANA is doing to help advance the cause of nursing at a national level – and how you can get involved in the push for quality health care for all.

[Take Action](#). Because your voice matters – become an advocate!



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What Federal Agencies Does ANA Monitor?

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How Can Individual Nurses Impact Federal Rules and Regulations?

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Select a topic to learn more about Federal Issues.

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Reducing Gun Violence

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Nursing Shortage

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Appropriate Staffing

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Workplace Health and Safety

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Environmental Health

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General issues

Email sent by  
U. Enriquez,  
RN August 8,  
2023

## Tell Congress to Support the Momnibus!

Not only does the United States suffer from one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, but it is also one of only a few countries in the world where maternal mortality rates are actually **rising**. Maternal mortality rates for Black and Native Americans are **2 to 4 times** higher than their white counterparts. Hispanic and Asian-American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) people also experience elevated rates of maternal morbidity.

However, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that **more than 80%** of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States are preventable. We know there are solutions to mitigate these preventable deaths.

A new proposal, The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, or 'Momnibus', is a combination of individual bills all written to address the maternal health crisis. We have highlighted two of the acts to illustrate how vital and necessary this bill is. The Kira Johnson Act for example, will fund community-based organizations working to advance maternal health equity. The Perinatal Workforce Act will invest in and grow the number of maternity care providers offering culturally congruent care to mothers and babies. These are just two pieces of legislation comprising the 'Momnibus' that will have a direct impact on maternal health in the United States.

We are asking Congress to take action and pass the 'Momnibus'! We know this legislation will save lives.

On behalf of your patients, and in honor of mothers, babies, and families in need of care, let's get this done.

*We know that personalized letters have an even greater impact – if this legislation will directly impact your work or the work of a nurse you know, please consider sharing your story in the note to Congress.*

**When you submit, you grant us the right to use, reproduce, and publish your story as we deem appropriate (no personally identifiable information will be included without your permission). By submitting your story to us, you warrant that it does not infringe on anyone's copyright or other rights.**

## Send an email to your officials with one click!

Subject: Please Support the Black Maternal Health Act!

Dear Rep. Nadler ([and 2 others](#)),

As a nurse and your constituent, I am urging you to support the Black Maternal Health Act or, [Momnibus!](#)

Not only does the United States suffer from one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, but it is also the only country in the world where maternal mortality rates are actually rising. Maternal mortality rates for Black and Native Americans are even higher at two to four times greater than that of their white counterparts. Hispanic and AAPI people also [experience](#) elevated rates of maternal morbidity.

The [Momnibus](#) includes 12 individual bills that:

- Make critical investments in social determinants of [health](#);
- Extend WIC eligibility in the postpartum and breastfeeding [periods](#);
- Provide funding to community-based organizations,
- Increase funding for programs to improve maternal health care for [veterans](#);
- Grow and diversify the perinatal [workforce](#);
- Improve data collection processes and quality [measures](#);
- Support moms with maternal mental health conditions and substance use [disorders](#);
- Improve maternal health care and support for incarcerated [moms](#);
- Invest in digital tools to improve maternal health outcomes in underserved [areas](#);
- Promote innovative payment [models](#);
- Invest in federal programs to address maternal and infant health risks during public health [emergencies](#);
- Invest in community-based initiatives to reduce levels of and exposure to climate change-related risks for moms and [babies](#);
- Promote maternal vaccinations to protect the health of moms and babies.

We know this legislation will save lives. On behalf of your constituents, and in honor of mothers, babies, and families in need of care, please support the [Momnibus!](#)

Regards,  
Uvannie Enriquez  
520 W 56th St

 **Send Email**

- Send me emails about this campaign
- Send me text messages about this campaign

ANA Action Alerts will send you about 2 text messages per month. Message and Data Rates May Apply. Reply STOP to optout, HELP for help.

Share with Others  
 [Twitter](#)  [Facebook](#)

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[EXTERNAL] Thank you for sending your letter!

Molly McTaggart, American Nurses Association <rreaction@ana.org>

Fri 8/11/2023 3:56 PM

To: Enriquez, Uvannie <uve9001@nyp.org>

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

This message came from outside your organization.

Report Suspicious

Dear Uvannie,

Thank you for reaching out to your elected officials urging them to improve maternal health outcomes and save lives!

Will you help keep the momentum going? Share this action with your friends and family, and ask them to speak out by sending a message, too:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Plus, if you haven't already, sign up for our texting list now to get the latest breaking news about issues affecting nurses and advocates – just text ANA to 52886 or [click here](#).

Thanks for all you do,  
-Molly, ANA

## [EXTERNAL] Thank You for Contacting Me

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand <senator@Gillibrand.senate.gov>

Fri 8/11/2023 4:44 PM

To: Enriquez, Uvannie <uve9001@nyp.org>

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Thank you for contacting my office. Your thoughts and concerns are very important to me and you will receive a more detailed response shortly. I sincerely appreciate your patience in waiting for this response, as our mail volume is often significant.

If this is a request for assistance with a federal agency or an immigration case, please contact my Department of Constituent Affairs directly by phone at (212) 688 - 6262 or email [casework@gillibrand.senate.gov](mailto:casework@gillibrand.senate.gov).

Thank you again for contacting my office.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

[EXTERNAL] Reply from Senator Gillibrand

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand <senator@Gillibrand.senate.gov>

Mon 11/27/2023 3:58 PM

To: Enriquez, Uvannie <uve9001@nyp.org>

**This Message Is From an External Sender**

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**KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND**  
NEW YORK  
SENATOR  
  
RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
SUITE 478  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205  
202-224-4451

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

**COMMITTEES:**  
AGRICULTURE  
ARMED SERVICES  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Dear Ms. Enriquez,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the *Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*.

It is critical to address the crisis of maternal mortality, especially among Black women. I am a proud original cosponsor of the *Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*. This comprehensive legislation will help end preventable maternal mortality and diminish maternal health disparities in our country by investing in community-based programs and expanding access to affordable, high-quality care. It is shameful that the United States continues to have the highest rate of maternal mortality in the developed world, with maternal deaths only continuing to rise.

As one of the few mothers in the Senate, addressing the maternal mortality crisis is one of my top priorities. The Momnibus includes my *Moms Matter Act*, which will help to provide critical mental health and substance use disorder support to pregnant people and moms. In addition, I worked to establish the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline that passed in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023*, to provide support to mothers and families during and after pregnancy. I will continue working to improve maternal care and fighting to end the maternal mortality crisis.

Thank you again for contacting me about the *Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*. I hope that you keep in touch with my office regarding future legislation and concerns you may have. For more information on this and other important issues, please visit my website at <https://gillibrand.senate.gov>.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

[EXTERNAL] A message from Senator Charles E. Schumer

Senator Schumer <senator@schumer.senate.gov>

Mon 11/27/2023 6:08 PM

To: Enriquez, Uvannie <uve9001@nyp.org>

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

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Dear Ms. Enriquez:

Thank you for writing to express your support for S.1606, the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act. I deeply share your concerns and agree that a nation as wealthy and advanced as the United States should not have one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates. I am dedicated to ending this crisis.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 80% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable over the 2017 to 2019 period. The maternal mortality rate in 2021 was 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021, increasing drastically from 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020. In 2020, the maternal mortality rate for black women was 2.9 times the maternal mortality rate for white women. The U.S. has, by far, the worst maternal mortality rate among developed nations, and the problem severely impacts black women. It is alarming that there are significant racial disparities in rates of maternal mortality.

I believe we must take bold actions to address this epidemic. That is why during the 117th Congress, I was proud to cosponsor the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 - historic legislation comprised of twelve individual bills to address the racial inequities at the root of our Nation's maternal health crisis, including provisions to support moms with maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders. I am pleased to share that this bill was reintroduced by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) on May 15, 2023.

In addition to the reintroduction of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, I am delighted to note that as a legislative body, we recently made monumental progress on uplifting maternal health. In the Fiscal Year 2023 federal spending bill, I worked hard to increase funding and secure a 5-year extension on the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), which is a critical program that supports pregnant people and parents with young children. Additionally, this comprehensive funding bill allocated \$324 million toward programs that aim to improve maternal health. These programs will work to address many goals laid out in S.1606, such as improving the health of pregnant and postpartum women and their babies, expanding maternal mental health care, increasing and diversifying maternity care providers, and expanding access to maternal health care in rural and underserved areas. While my colleagues and I have achieved substantial funding to address maternal health outcome disparities, I understand that more needs to be done, especially at a time when black women in New York are twice as likely to die during childbirth compared to women in other developed countries.

Again, thank you for contacting me. Please keep in touch with your thoughts and opinions.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Please do not respond to this email. To send another message please visit my website at <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck> . Thank you.

# Facebook post to promote Momnibus

Facebook Search

Home Video Marketplace Friends Activity

**Uvannie Enriquez Castro** ...

Studied Nursing at University of San Carlos - Cebu

Edit details

Add hobbies

Add featured

**Photos** [See all photos](#)



**Posts** Filters Manage posts

List view Grid view

**Uvannie Enriquez Castro**  
August 30 at 3:06 PM · Verified Constituent · ...

Please join me in supporting the Momnibus!

**P2ACO**  
**Tell Congress to Support the Momnibus!**  
Did you know over 80% of maternal deaths are preventable? Let's tell Congress to do something about it! Urge Congress to support the 'Momnibus'! I just emailed my elected officials, can you?

An Enriquez, Carolyn Appel and 1 other 2 comments 1 share

Like Comment Share

**Carolyn Appel**  
Just did!  
Love Reply 2w

**Uvannie Enriquez Castro**  
Thanks, Carolyn!  
Like Reply 2w

Write a comment... ...