

Key committee votes to create task force on pregnant and lactating women

April 18 2016

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine announced today that the Senate Health Education Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee has approved bill S. 2745 by voice vote, a bill intended to promote the inclusion of minorities in clinical research. This legislation includes a key provision that would create a Task Force on Pregnant Women and Lactating Women.

SMFM held a workshop on the issue of medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding at its annual meeting in February 2015, which was co-sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

"We are thrilled to see this initiative move to the next step in the legislative process," stated Mary Norton, M.D., president of SMFM. "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. This legislation is a great first step toward greater collaboration and communication among federal agencies and public stakeholders on this important issue."

In her opening statement, HELP Committee Ranking Member Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), noted her thanks to the legislation's cosponsors, including Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Kirk (R-IL), Baldwin (D-WI), Warren (D-MA) and Chairman Alexander (R-TN) and herself. She

noted specifically the inclusion of this [task force](#) to ensure safer medications and greater information for pregnant women and new mothers.

In 2014, SMFM began working with the March of Dimes, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics to form the Coalition to Advance Maternal Therapeutics. The Coalition has been working to educate and inform Congress and other policymakers on the issues related to lack of data and information on medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

The provision included in S. 2745 will create a task force housed within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that will improve federal interagency and key stakeholder communication, coordination and collaboration to advance research and information sharing on medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding. It will include federal agencies such as National Institutes of Health, U.S. Food & Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as public stakeholders from professional societies, consumer representation and industry representation to prioritize and identify gaps in research and recommend a path forward on greater inclusion of pregnant and breastfeeding women in research.

More information: www.ajog.org/issues?publication=ymob&jc=ymob#

Provided by Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

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