

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

September 2, 2026

The Honorable Erica Schwartz, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Schwartz,

I write to draw attention to the disturbing impact the Trump Administration's actions have had on maternal and infant health. As the newly Senate-confirmed Director for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is my hope that you will change course and restore the CDC maternal and infant health programs that have been decimated over the last year.

Last year, nearly a third of CDC's workforce was haphazardly fired – and in some cases – reinstated and then later fired again.^{1,2} Included in those layoffs were staff responsible for CDC's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and other maternal health programs within CDC's Division of Reproductive Health.³ PRAMS collects information directly from mothers on their health, behaviors, and experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. This invaluable data on maternal and infant health trends across the country is crucial for improving maternal and infant health. Without staff to manage the program, we as a nation are losing these important data that could be leveraged to end the maternal mortality crisis and improve infant health.⁴

Every maternal death is a tragedy. Far too many women continue to die during pregnancy, childbirth, or the year following pregnancy from causes that medical experts have determined can often be prevented. It is unconscionable to continue to allow CDC's maternal health programs be left vacant.

I hope you will restore CDC's Division for Reproductive Health and I request you respond to the following questions no later than September 26, 2026.

1. Will you immediately restore the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) personnel and commit to filling every position necessary for the fulsome and effective operation of this program within one month?

¹ Georgia Public Broadcasting. "Public health workers reflect on a year since mass layoffs at the CDC," Sofi Gates, February 11, 2026. <https://www.gpb.org/news/2026/02/11/public-health-workers-reflect-on-year-mass-layoffs-at-the-cdc>

² The Guardian. "CDC employees on chaos of being fired, rehired and fired again: 'stuck in limbo'," Melody Schreiber, October 31, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/31/cdc-employees-hiring-firing-limbo>

³ Stat News. "Gold-standard maternal mortality database in limbo as CDC staff placed on leave," Anil Oza, April 1, 2025. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/04/01/prams-maternal-mortality-cdc-layoffs/>

⁴ Bleich, S., Handler, A., and Shulman, H. *Losing Our Lens on Maternal and Infant Health – The Consequences of Disrupting PRAMS*. (July 23, 2026). <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2852259>

2. What actions is CDC taking to address the nation's maternal mortality crisis? How have last year's reductions in force impacted the agency's ability to support states in reducing unnecessary maternal deaths?
3. How many employees supporting CDC's maternal health programs have been affected by reductions in force or placed on administrative leave since March 2025? How many of those positions do you intend to restore or refill?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator