Dear Colleague:

We are writing to invite you to join us in recognizing September as Infant Mortality Awareness Month. As you may know, the U.S. infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year in the U.S. more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely, and an estimated 26,000 children die before their first birthday. This is unacceptable, and as a nation, we must do better. September is dedicated to raising awareness about this issue in order to help expectant mothers and fathers seek out the best care possible.

Mobile technologies represent some of the most innovative initiatives to help address factors that contribute to our nation’s health challenges, including the high infant mortality rate. One of these promising mobile technologies is text4baby, a public-private partnership that provides pregnant women and new parents with free text messages timed to their due date or baby’s date of birth until the baby reaches 1 year of age. The messages provide essential health information about early and adequate prenatal care, immunizations, safe sleep, prevention of birth defects, avoidance of substance abuse, well baby care, injury prevention and other critical health and safety issues. At a crucial juncture, text4baby is reaching mothers and fathers who need health information the most through a medium that is easy, convenient and standard for the 81 percent of adult women in the U.S. who have cell phones.

As the largest and first free health text messaging service in the U.S., text4baby is working with over 750 public and private partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with the goal of increasing prenatal health care knowledge and reducing our country’s infant mortality rate. This month, we urge you to encourage new parents to seek out the best prenatal and perinatal care possible through regular wellness visits with their doctors and nurses, and through enrollment in innovative new programs, such as text4baby. Attached, please find a tip sheet on ways that you can provide information to your constituents about Infant Mortality Awareness Month and demonstrate your commitment to new parents and babies.

Text4baby is currently running a State Enrollment Contest to draw more attention to the importance of preventive health care for new parents and their children. By simply speaking about text4baby (or tweeting it), individual members of Congress have improved public awareness about prenatal health care and text4baby’s role in improving individual wellness and health outcomes.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Senator Thomas Carper

Senator Thad Cochran

Senator Kelly Ayotte

Senator Mary Landrieu