

United States Senate

October 8, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

The United States faces a maternal health crisis. A larger share of American women and infants die from preventable causes than women and infants in peer nations. Despite this crisis, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services chose in January 2025 to shut down the only nationwide system that helps the public track the performance of federal programs that are intended to keep mothers and babies from dying preventable deaths. We urge you to immediately reinstate access to this centralized system and publicly release unpublished data from the past year and a half.

Before January 2025, the federal Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, or “PRAMS,” was the only nationwide system that helped us understand whether the programs that are intended to reduce maternal and infant deaths are working. Each month, states asked women who have recently given birth about their health and experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. For decades, this information had been collected, anonymized, and posted in the PRAMS system by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), providing a nationwide snapshot of the challenges that women face during prenatal and postpartum care, their mental and physical health, and the health of their babies.

Researchers and policymakers have used information from PRAMS to design programs that stop preventable maternal and infant deaths. For example, the system helped health workers in New Hampshire more effectively screen for and treat substance use in pregnant women. In West Virginia, the state used PRAMS to identify high rates of unintended pregnancies among women battling addiction and used that information to target resources and reduce the number of babies born with opioid withdrawal syndrome. Through PRAMS, the State of Maine found that pregnant women in that state used tobacco at a high rate, and in response, Maine created a new program to support smoking cessation among pregnant and postpartum women.

In January 2025, the administration shut down the PRAMS software that states use to collect maternal health data and the portal that the public used to access it. This forced many states to stop collecting responses for an average of three months, and in some cases for as long as eight months. You fired the CDC staff responsible for managing the program and have yet to restore the system that researchers used to study national PRAMS data.

I am deeply concerned that disruptions to PRAMS have left permanent gaps in our understanding of maternal and infant health. I urge you to reinstate the CDC staff working on PRAMS, restore

public access to the portal for studying national PRAMS data, and release PRAMS data that has not been made publicly available for the past year and a half.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie Hassan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Cc: CDC Director Dr. Erica Schwartz