

The National Perinatal Association and 1,000 Days Partner to Support Paid Family Leave Legislation

Cheryl A. Milford, Ed.S.

The National Perinatal Association (NPA) is an interdisciplinary organization that strives to be a leading voice for perinatal care in the United States. Our diverse membership is comprised of healthcare providers, parents & caregivers, educators, and service providers, all driven by their desire to give voice to and support babies and families at risk across the country.

Members of the NPA write a regular peer-reviewed column in Neonatology Today.



The National Perinatal Association (NPA) partners with other nonprofits in the perinatal community to support optimal perinatal care in the United States. In 2019, NPA became partners with 1,000 Days to advocate for paid family leave legislation at the federal level.

Established in 1977, the National Perinatal Association has a forty- three-year history of leadership and advocacy in improving perinatal care. NPA has been a home for new ideas and progressive practices since its founding. The National Perinatal Association (NPA) is an interdisciplinary organization of professionals, parents, and advocates that is the leading voice in perinatal care in the United States. We educate, advocate, and integrate all voices with equality and respect to support pregnant

women, infants, and their families and the professionals who care for them. NPA works to create positive change in perinatal care by partnering with healthcare, government, and nonprofit organizations.

“The First 1,000 Days was initiated in 2010 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in response to ground-breaking scientific evidence that identified a powerful window of opportunity from a woman’s pregnancy to a child’s 2nd birthday when nutrition has a long-term impact on the future health and development of both children and societies.”

NPA brings all stakeholders to the table to promote optimal perinatal care in the United States. Our uniqueness in the non-profit sector is our commitment that all voices are heard equally and respectfully. The NPA is defined by families and professionals working together with advocates to support practice and policy changes based on evidence-based literature and family experiences.

1,000 Days was initiated in 2010 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in response to ground-breaking scientific evidence that identified a powerful window of opportunity from a woman’s pregnancy to a child’s 2nd birthday when nutrition has a long-term impact on the future health and development of both children and societies. The non-profit named this window of opportunity,

the first 1,000 Days.

With the backing of the U.S. Government, the Government of Ireland, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and several non-profit organizations, 1,000 Days began its work as a partnership to drive greater action and investment to improve nutrition for women and young children throughout the world. In 2015, the work expanded to focus on the issues that impact the nutrition and well-being of mothers, babies, and toddlers in the U.S., particularly the most vulnerable.

1,000 Days is the leading non-profit advocacy organization working in the U.S. and around the world to ensure women and children have the healthiest first 1,000 days. 1,000 Days’ mission is to make the well-being of women and children in the first 1,000 days a policy and funding priority.

The NPA’s and 1,000 Days’ partnership was formalized in early 2019. It was clear that our missions and interests were compatible and could advance optimal perinatal care in the United States. Such partnerships strengthen our voices in advocacy, education, and collaboration.

Paid Family Leave has been found in other countries to improve maternal and child health. Pregnancy, childbirth, and the transition to motherhood is a critical period in a woman’s life. Paid Family Leave gives mothers the time they need to heal from their pregnancy, establish breastfeeding, improve maternal mental health, and decrease healthcare inequities.

Given the significant levels of postpartum depression in the United States, Paid Family Leave can decrease this mental health issue by giving mothers time to become attached to their babies and take care of themselves. The United States is the only wealthy country in the world that does provide paid leave for new mothers. It continues to be supported in other countries because it improves maternal and child outcomes. It is cost-effective as well



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as important for the basic unit of all societies, the family.

With strong advocacy from the perinatal community, including NPA and 1,000 Days, Congress included 12 weeks of paid parental leave for federal workers in the National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1790). President Trump signed the legislation on December 20, 2019. This was an essential first step, with the federal government being the largest employer in the United States.

The National Perinatal Association and 1,000 Days continue to support and advocate for H.R. 1185-FAMILY Act in the House of Representatives. Bipartisan sponsors Representatives Christopher Smith (R) and Rosa DeLauro (D) introduced the legislation in early 2019. As of December 31, 2019, the legislation had 203 bipartisan co-sponsors. The bill supports 12 weeks of paid leave and is based on the California Paid Parent Leave Act of 2019, which provides 12 weeks of paid parental leave.

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The Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support is holding hearings on this legislation. The National Perinatal Association and 1,000 Days have signed onto letters of support from the perinatal community, which includes many of NPA's nonprofit partners.

It is crucial that perinatal professionals and families contact their congressman to advocate for paid family leave, HR1185 FAMILY Act. The perinatal community can provide the rationale and expertise to the House to pass this legislation. We are all advocates for mothers, infants, and their families. You can contact your repre-

sentative at (202) 224-3121. The House Switchboard will connect you. It is a very quick call, and you can make a difference in how we care for families in the first 1,000 Days.

References

1. <https://thousandddays.org/about/our-story/>
2. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1790>
3. https://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/paid_family_leave.htm
4. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1185>

Disclosure: The National Perinatal Association www.nationalperinatal.org is a 501c3 organization that provides education and advocacy around issues affecting the health of mothers, babies, and families.

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