

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 15, 2024

Dr. Kathleen Toomey
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Public Health
200 Piedmont Avenue, SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Dr. Toomey,

I am writing today to express my support for the innovative Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) for Dads-Georgia, a public health program piloted in Georgia targeted at reaching new fathers. PRAMS for Dads, a collaboration between Georgia's Department of Public Health (DPH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, collects actionable data on the health behaviors and experiences of new fathers in the perinatal period. Modeled after the CDC's maternal PRAMS, PRAMS for Dads sheds light on the public health needs of fathers during early parenthood.

Georgia launched the PRAMS for Dads pilot project in 2018, providing essential public health data on fathers during the perinatal period for the first time. The Georgia PRAMS for Dads pilot data showed the positive effect of father engagement on continued breastfeeding and safe sleep behaviors, highlighting key metrics for potential public health education and community intervention to better protect babies. The Georgia pilot project also discovered that less than 50 percent of fathers had a primary care provider and only 37 percent had seen a doctor in the past year.

With growing acknowledgment that including fathers in maternal and child health initiatives improves health outcomes for the *entire* family, numerous state public health departments, including in Massachusetts, North Dakota, Ohio, and Michigan, have adopted their own PRAMS for Dads programs.

As a dad myself, I know that the transition into the life-changing and important role of fatherhood can be a powerful lever for change. PRAMS for Dads collects vital data about the experiences of new fathers directly from fathers, with a long-term goal of eliminating systemic barriers to healthy families. This proven approach enhances the overall health and quality of life of fathers, mothers, and babies in Georgia.

Thank you again for your important work. I am proud that Georgia continues to be a leader on innovative data collection that supports fathers and families, and I look forward to pushing for more federal action on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Warnock". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator