

## **Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee Hearing**

November 3, 2015

On behalf of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists:

"The Perinatal Quality Collaborative of North Carolina has done a broad variety of important work, but one critical focus has been an initiative to increase breastfeeding rates. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends breastfeeding because of a number of maternal and infant benefits, including improved protection from infection, reduced risk of obesity and cardiovascular disease, even a decrease in postpartum blood loss. Our collaborative collected data to assess the gap between intention to breastfeed and rate of actual infants exclusively breastfed, and then implemented solutions to reduce that gap.

Over the course of about two and a half years, or 29 months, the Perinatal Quality Collaborative of North Carolina was able to increase breastfeeding support by 78%, reduce pacifier use by 53%, and achieve a 20% increase in exclusive breastfeeding rates. Over 50% of births in North Carolina are covered by Medicaid, so any cost savings realized through these initiatives has a positive impact on state and federal funds. It is essential that we support the important quality improving and cost-saving work being done by perinatal collaboratives in North Carolina and across the United States, as well as expanding into states that lack them."