



**Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Senate Bill 559 by Sen. Borris Miles  
Mar. 5, 2019**

Written testimony submitted on behalf of:  
Texas Medical Association  
Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists District XI (Texas)  
Texas Academy of Family Physicians

The Texas Medical Association, Texas Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists — Chapter XI (Texas), and Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists represent more than 53,000 physician, resident, and medical student members.

We strongly support Senate Bill 559 by Sen. Borris Miles relating to patient medical records regarding maternal death. The proposal is an important step in improving the quality and timeliness of maternal mortality reviews in Texas.

In 2013, Senate Bill 495 (83rd Legislature, Regular Session) created the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force, and since that time task force members and staff of the Texas Department of State Health Services have refined the review process here in Texas. That process includes examining medical records of the deceased for comprehensive analysis of any potential contributors to the death and any opportunities for intervention. The quality of the review depends on the data and medical records available for review. When one medical record or data element is not available, the picture is incomplete.

In the latest task force report, the group noted one specific challenge in completing reviews: delayed responses from the custodians of a patient's medical records. With reported delays of more than a year from the department's request, the critical information is not available for the volunteer physicians and health care professionals appointed to the task force. They cannot complete the review, and recommendations for preventing future deaths and severe maternal morbidity are delayed.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our support for the bill and commend your efforts to improve maternal health in Texas.