May 1, 2014

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
The United States Senate
Washington D.C., 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical subspecialists, I write to thank you for introducing the TRICARE Moms Improvement Act of 2014 (S. 1994).

The AAP strongly recommends breastfeeding as the preferred feeding for all infants, including preterm newborn infants. Breastfeeding has proven to have numerous health benefits for both mother and child. Studies show that children who are not breastfed have higher rates of mortality, meningitis, some types of cancers, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, bacterial and viral infections, ear infections, juvenile diabetes, some chronic liver diseases, allergies and obesity. Due to the resounding evidence of improved child health and well-being, AAP recommends that mothers breastfeed exclusively for the first six months, but continue breastfeeding for at least the first year of a child’s life.

S. 1994 would require TRICARE to cover breastfeeding equipment, like breast pumps, along with support and counseling, as required by most health plans under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), making it easier for mothers covered by TRICARE to breastfeed their children. These provisions would ensure that military mothers have the same access to breastfeeding equipment and support that most other health insurance plans are required to provide under the ACA.

The AAP appreciates your commitment to promoting breastfeeding for military mothers. We are pleased to support the TRICARE Moms Improvement Act of 2014 and we look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of all our nation’s children.

Sincerely,

James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP
President

JMP/aam