

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

6/5/2019

Sarah Hirshland
Chief Executive Officer
The United States Olympic Committee
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear Ms. Hirshland,

As members of the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection, which has jurisdiction over the health and safety of U.S. Olympic Athletes, we write to gain a better understanding of the United States Olympic Committee's (USOC) policy as it relates to pregnancy and health insurance coverage. According to a recent op-ed video in the *New York Times* by Olympic runner Alysia Montaña, the USOC "strips [female athletes of their] health insurance if [they] do not stay at the top of their game during [their] pregnancy."¹ This discontinuation of health care coverage when a female athlete needs it most is unconscionable and may put at risk her health and that of her child.

U.S. Olympic athletes may receive health insurance from the USOC through the Elite Athlete Health Insurance (EAHI) program. This is one of the few benefits that the USOC provides to individuals representing the United States on the national stage. Underwritten by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, the EAHI program meets the minimum essential benefits requirement outlined in the Affordable Care Act.² This means, by definition, that the plan covers maternity and newborn care. To be eligible for the EAHI program, an athlete must meet criteria set by the National Governing Board (NGB) for each sport. For example, USA Track and Field (USATF) offers EAHI to athletes who were among the top eight finishers in one of the two most recent world-major championships or have achieved a top twenty world rank in the last year.³

According to Ms. Montaña's recent opinion piece, the USOC terminated EAHI coverage for two elite pregnant USATF athletes due to their temporary inability to compete at the top of their sport during pregnancy. To better understand if this is a universal policy imposed on U.S. Olympic

¹ Alysia Montaña, Video by Max Cantor and Taige Jensen, Written and Produced by Lindsay Crouse, Opinion, *Nike Told Me to Dream Crazy, Until I Wanted a Baby*, N.Y. Times (May 12, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/opinion/nike-maternity-leave.html>.

² Team USA, Elite Athlete Health Insurance Program (EAHI) Frequently Asked Questions 2019, <https://www.teamusa.org/Portal/FAQ/EAHI>.

³ USCO Elite Athlete Health Insurance, www.usatf.org/usatf/files/35/35471080-9aa0-4b92-9b86-cb4795c961d9.docx.

athletes, we respectfully request a staff briefing on this issue by June 14, 2019. To set up this briefing or if you have any questions please contact Dr. Avenel Joseph of Senator Markey's staff at 202-224-2742.

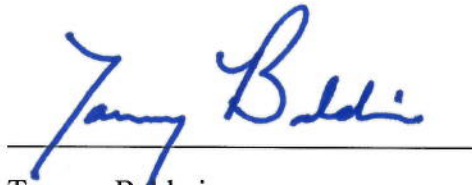
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator