

# CURRENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH DISPARITIES

## BLUEPRINT FOR ADDRESSING MATERNAL HEALTH CRISIS

In June 2022, the Biden Administration released the Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis. The Blueprint outlines priorities and actions across federal agencies to improve access to coverage and care, expand and enhance data collection and research, and much more.

## MEDICAID COVERAGE DURING THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD

Recent federal legislation has expanded access to and helped stabilize Medicaid coverage during the postpartum period. Historically, many pregnant women under Medicaid lost coverage at the end of a 60-day postpartum coverage period. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 provided states a new option for five years, beginning April 1, 2022, to extend postpartum coverage to a full year.

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES & MATERNAL/INFANT HEALTH OUTCOMES

As part of its maternity care action plan, CMS has outlined a proposal for a "Birthing-Friendly" hospital designation that would provide public information on hospitals that have implemented best practices in areas of health care quality, safety, and equity for pregnant and postpartum patients.

## ENHANCED ACCESS TO DATA ON MATERNAL/INFANT HEALTH OUTCOMES/DISPARITIES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts national pregnancy-related mortality surveillance and regularly releases findings as a source of information around the risk factors and causes of pregnancy-related deaths.

## EFFORTS TO INCREASE WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DOULAS AND OTHER SERVICES

Studies have shown that a more diverse healthcare workforce and the use of doulas may improve birth outcomes. The Biden Administration's Blueprint includes efforts to develop a maternal care pipeline to provide scholarships to students from underrepresented communities. Blueprint includes a FY23 budget request for \$20 million to grow and diversify the doula workforce.

## COMMUNITIES ARE ENGAGED IN EFFORTS TO ADVANCE MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH

Several states have developed plans and initiatives to address disparities in maternal and infant outcomes. In addition, many state Medicaid programs have implemented policies, programs, and initiatives to improve maternity care and outcomes. Also, five states reported including Performance Improvement Projects (PIPS) for their Medicaid services that focused specifically on reducing disparities related to maternal and child health in FY22.

## ORGANIZATIONS ARE ADVOCATING FOR MORE INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

The field of maternal mental health and substance use encompasses a large range of conditions that affect the health of parents and their infants. Community-based and provider organizations are calling for a number of policy and structural changes to address challenges related to maternal mental health.

## THE RECENT OVERTURNING OF ROE V. WADE MAY CONTRIBUTE TO WIDENING DISPARITIES IN MATERNAL/INFANT HEALTH

Increased barriers to abortion for people of color may widen the already existing large disparities in maternal and infant health, have negative economic consequences for families, and increase risk of criminalization for pregnant people of color.

Resource: [Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health: Current Status and Efforts to Address Them](#)