

36th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill
Black Nurses: A Call for Transformative Health Equity Globally

Inequities in Black Maternal Mortality

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) serves as a national nursing body to influence legislation and policies that support comprehensive efforts to reduce inequities in Black maternal mortality. Medical neglect towards Black women is a longstanding historical tragedy. Black women in the U.S. are most likely to die from preventable complications related to pregnancy or childbirth. Maternal mortality disproportionately impacts the Black community in comparison to other communities. The NBNA calls on the 118th Congress to address maternal mortality as a public health crisis.

Background

- The Black maternal mortality rate in 2021 was **89%** higher than the rate in 2018.
- The rate of maternal mortality for Black women was **69.9** deaths per 100,000, **2.6** times higher than that for White mothers in 2021.
- More than **80%** of pregnancy-related complications are preventable; non- Hispanic Black women account for 31.4%.
- One out of eight women have symptoms of postpartum depression, and **50%** of pregnant women diagnosed with depression are undertreated.
- Black single mothers are **6 times** more likely than the general population to experience depressive symptoms.
- Suicide accounts for **20%** of postpartum deaths
- Black women are **2 times** more likely to experience maternal mental health conditions but less likely to receive care.

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls upon the 118th Congress to:

- **Support legislation** that will increase the diversity of the perinatal healthcare workforce.
- **Support the passage of the Healthy Moms and Babies Acts** - will improve maternal and child health care by coordinating and providing “whole-person care,” supporting outcomes-focus and community-based prevention supporting stillbirth prevention activities, and expanding the maternal health **H.R.4605/S.948**
- **Support the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act (H.R. 3305/S. 1606)** - builds on existing legislation to comprehensively address every dimension of the maternal health crisis in America.
- **Support the Community Access, Resources, and Empowerment for Moms Act (H.R. 5568/S.2846)** - supports the maternal health workforce, promotes access to prenatal and postpartum care, and provides the resources that moms and babies need to thrive.
- **Support the Maximizing Outcomes for Moms through Medicaid Improvement and Enhancement of Services Act, S. 3090/H.R.6004** - make critical investments in social determinants of health that influence maternal health outcomes such as housing, transportation, and nutrition.

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