

## **34<sup>th</sup> National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill**

**Theme: Health Equity, Nursing Resilience & Innovations: NBNA's New Call to Action**

### **Black Maternal and Infant Health Mortality**

The National Black Nurses Association supports comprehensive efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality and its devastating effects. Black medical neglect towards women is a longstanding historical tragedy. NBNA calls on the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to address maternal and infant mortality as a public health crisis. Maternal and infant mortality disproportionately impacts the Black community in comparison to other communities and this is unacceptable.

#### **Background**

- In 2019, 754 women were identified as having died in the United States as a result of pregnancy or delivery complications.
- Black women are shown to have a disproportionate fatality rate during pregnancy or within 42 days after giving birth.
- In 2019, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women was 44.0 deaths per 100,000 live births
- The maternal mortality rate for women aged 40 and over (81.9 per 100,000 live births) is nearly 8 times that for women under age 25.
- The maternal mortality rate for 2019 (20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births) was significantly higher than the rate for 2018.
- African American infants are 3.8 times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight as compared to non-Hispanic white infants.
- Black infants are at three times greater risk of accidental death than are White infants, and at more than four times the risk of dying from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Black infants have 2.3 times the infant mortality rate as White infants.

#### **Recommendations to Legislators**

NBNA calls upon the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to:

- Support legislation that will increase the diversity of the perinatal health care workforce.
- Re-introduce doula-related legislation to provide access to doula care and birth support during the pandemic and for the foreseeable future, passing effective, equitable doula legislation is imperative.
- Support legislation like the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act which builds on existing legislation to comprehensively address every dimension of the maternal health crisis in America.
- Provide investment in digital tools like telehealth to improve maternal health outcomes, especially in underserved areas.
- Support legislation that makes key investments in social determinants to save moms and end disparities in maternal health outcomes.
- Support legislation that invests in community-based programs that provide mental and behavioral health treatments and support to moms with maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders.

## **References**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics, 2021. Retrieved on December 21, 2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/index.htm>

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