

37th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill
Reimagining Health Equity: Addressing Ongoing Threats to America's Well-being
Addressing the Global Crisis of 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. **Data show that 80% of America's maternal deaths are preventable.** Maternal mortality disproportionately impacts the Black community in comparison to other communities. Black women in the U.S. are most likely to die from preventable complications related to pregnancy or childbirth.^{5,6} **The NBNA calls on the 119th Congress to address maternal mortality as a public health crisis.**

Background

- In 2021, approximately **1,205** women died of maternal causes.^{1,2}
- 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.^{1,4}
- Maternal deaths occur during pregnancy and the first year after giving birth, with **53%** happening during the postpartum period.²
- More than **80%** of pregnancy-related complications are preventable; non-Hispanic Black women account for **31%** of these cases.^{3,5,6}
- Suicide is a leading cause of death in the perinatal period (pregnancy to one year after birth).^{7,8,9,10}
- Perhaps a state R/T the domestic BMH death rate compared to less developed nations
- (Need a stat R/T to the lack of diversity of the perinatal healthcare workforce)
- Women ages 40 and over have a maternal mortality rate **6.8** times higher than those under age 25.²

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls upon the 119th Congress to support legislation such as:

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

References

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- ³Frieden, J. (2023, March 16). Maternal mortality rose significantly in 2021, CDC says. *MedPage Today*. <https://www.medpagetoday.com/obgyn/pregnancy/103543>
- ⁴Gunja, M. Z., Gumas, E. D., & Williams, R. D. (2022, December 1). The U.S. maternal mortality crisis continues to worsen: An international comparison. *The Commonwealth Fund*. <https://doi.org/10.26099/8vem-fc65>
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- ⁸National Center for Health Statistics. (n.d.). Maternal mortality rates in the United States, 2021. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm#:~:text=In%202021%2C%201%2C205%20women%20died,20.1%20in%202019%20\(Table\)](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm#:~:text=In%202021%2C%201%2C205%20women%20died,20.1%20in%202019%20(Table))
- ⁹Taylor, J., & Gamble, C. M. (2017, November 17). Suffering in silence: Mood disorders. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/suffering-in-silence/>
- ¹⁰UPMC HealthBeat. (2020, December 24). Mental health challenges Black mothers face. <https://share.upmc.com/2020/07/black-maternal-mental-health/>