

End the Black Maternal Mortality Crisis Presented to the 119th U.S. Congress | Date: February 5, 2026

Black maternal health is a national emergency. The United States continues to face a maternal health crisis, and Black women bear the heaviest burden. Black women are nearly **three times more likely** to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women, regardless of income or education. Nurses are uniquely positioned to lead in prevention, early intervention, and advocacy, but they need federal support to address the systemic imbalances driving this crisis. As the trusted voice **of over 308,000 Black American nurses** across the country, **the National Black Nurses Association, Inc. (NBNA)** urges Congress to take urgent, comprehensive action to eliminate racial disparities in maternal health and end the Black maternal mortality crisis.

Policy Priorities for Congressional Action

1. **Pass the bipartisan Omnibus Act.** Enact the full suite of legislative proposals under the Omnibus Act, which invests in social determinants of health, workforce diversification, maternal mental health, and digital tools to improve outcomes addressing America's maternal health crisis.
2. **Increase Medicaid coverage for postpartum care** by requiring **12-month postpartum Medicaid coverage** mandatory in all states to ensure continuous care and reduce preventable deaths from postpartum complications.
3. **Fund community-based maternal health models.** Provide funding to community-based organizations that are working to improve maternal health outcomes and promote equity, i.e. birth centers, doulas, nurse-led care models that deliver culturally appropriate care.
4. **Expand implicit bias and anti-discriminatory training.** Mandate evidence-based **implicit bias training** for all healthcare providers receiving federal funds, as well as expanded investment in nursing education and inclusive excellence initiatives.
5. **Strengthen collection and accountability** by requiring standardized, **race-disaggregated** data reporting on maternal health outcomes to inform policy and resource allocation.
6. **Support the nursing workforce** by increasing funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs to recruit and retain Black nurses in maternal care roles and leadership.

Why This Matters

- In 2022, the U.S. maternal mortality rate was **32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births**, but **Black women faced a rate of 69.9**.¹
- **80%** of pregnancy-related deaths are **preventable**.²
- Structural racism, provider bias, and inadequate access to care are key drivers of the maternal mortality crisis.^{3,4}
- **Nurses are critical** to improving maternal outcomes through education, care coordination, and advocacy.⁵

References

1. CDC, National Center for Health Statistics (2023). *Maternal mortality rates in the United States, 2022*
2. CDC Foundation (2022). *Report from Maternal Mortality Review Committees*
3. National Partnership for Women & Families (2023). *Black women's maternal health: A multifaceted crisis demands action*
4. March of Dimes (2024). *Nowhere to go: Maternity care deserts across the U.S.*
5. Mohammed, H. H., El Hamed, Azza A., El-Fadil; Afefy, N. A., Sherif, N. A., & Ibrahim. S. M. (2025). The effectiveness of nurse-led antenatal education on maternal self-efficacy: An evidence-based approach. *BMC Nursing*, 24(895), 1-13.