



Where You Live Matters: Maternity Care Deserts and the Crisis of Access and Equity

Key points

5.6 million women across the U.S. live in a maternity care desert.

Maternity care deserts in the U.S. will impact **nearly 350,000 births this year.**

More than 8 out of 10 maternity care deserts have a high percentage of women with one or more chronic health conditions.

Policy recommendations

- Telehealth laws that permanently expand access to telehealth services.
- State Medicaid coverage of all forms of telehealth services: live video, remote patient monitoring, and audio-only.
- State policies that establish and support perinatal regionalization programs to ensure that pregnant people can access appropriate levels of maternity care in their geography.
- State policies that establish and support programs to expand and diversify the healthcare workforce serving in rural and underserved communities.
- Federal policy to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage in all states from 60 days to a full year.

Policy solutions

- Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2023 is a historic bicameral act made up of 13 bills with the goal of saving moms lives and addressing every dimension of the maternal health crisis in the United States.
 - Kira Johnson Act - establishes Respectful Maternity Care Compliance Programs in hospitals to promote accountability.
 - Perinatal Workforce Act - establishes programs to increase and diversify the number of maternity care providers and perinatal health workers.
 - Moms Matter Act - expands access to high-quality care for maternal mental health and substance use disorders.
 - Tech to Save Moms Act - expands telehealth services and technology-enabled training in maternal healthcare.
 - IMPACT to Save Moms Act - creates an innovative perinatal payment model for moms on Medicaid.
- H.R. 3838/S.2415 – Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act of 2023 supports states’ efforts to protect the health of moms during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; to eliminate inequities in adverse maternal health outcomes; and to improve healthcare quality.

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¹<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy/pregnant-women/need-to-know.html>

²<https://i7g4f9j6.stackpathcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/09220856/Improving-Maternal-Immunization-Status-White-Paper-Final.pdf>