

# 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of ALL moms and babies. We advocate for women, infants, children and families across a wide range of issues at the federal and state level. The diagram below, outlines the highest priority issues March of Dimes will champion, to improve health equity, reduce prematurity, prevent maternal mortality, and make measurable strides for the health of moms and babies.



## INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

**Tier 1:** Protect insurance coverage and improve group prenatal care access.

**Tier 2:** Expand Medicaid access and telehealth in maternity care deserts.



## SUPPORT HEALTHY WOMEN AND BABIES

**Tier 1:** Build programs to address the maternal health crisis that disproportionately affects women of color.

**Tier 2:** Support paid family leave, pregnancy accommodations, immunizations programs and address social determinants of health.



## IMPROVE RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE

**Tier 1:** Enhance newborn screening and support surveillance/research on maternal and child health.

**Tier 2:** Promote research for pregnant and breastfeeding woman and create infant mortality task force.



## PROTECT MOMS AND BABIES DURING COVID-19

**Tier 1:** Prioritize pregnant women, moms and infants in COVID-19 response.

**Tier 2:** Invest in public health infrastructure, data collection, and improvements in paid leave, nutrition and home visitation programs.

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### INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

March of Dimes advocates for access to quality and affordable private health insurance and public health coverage, as well as programs that provide key health care services.

#### Tier 1:

- Protecting coverage for people with pre-existing conditions and the requirement that all plans cover maternity and newborn care.
- Improving access to group prenatal care through enhanced payment and other models through the CMS Innovation Center.
- Improve telehealth access to providers and services for women living in maternity care deserts or those with other obstacles to receiving care.

#### Tier 2:

- Expanding access to Medicaid, including extending coverage for mothers after childbirth through federal and state legislation.
- Opposing regulations to expand on substandard insurance coverage such as short-term limited duration health plans and association health plans.
- Opposing harmful Medicaid block grant proposals, work requirements, and other barriers to coverage.
- Advocating for Medicaid and private insurance reimbursement for doula care.



### SUPPORT HEALTHY WOMEN AND BABIES

March of Dimes supports a broad range of policies and programs to promote health, improve health equity, prevent disease, further patient safety, and prevent infant mortality.

#### Tier 1:

- Advocating for a comprehensive national response to high maternal mortality and morbidity rates, especially among women of color who face health disparities.
- Advancing legislation to enhance and sustain Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs), perinatal quality collaboratives, extend postpartum coverage, implicit bias training for health providers, rural health access, and access to mental health services.

#### Tier 2:

- Advocating for policies and programs to prevent and treat substance use, including opioids, alcohol, and tobacco, with a focus on the safety and care of pregnant women and infants.
- Working closely with key federal agencies and Congress to fully implement the Protecting Our Infants Act and support critical treatment programs for women with substance use disorders and care for babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome.
- Advancing policies to support mothers and reduce health disparities in the workplace such as paid family leave, pregnancy accommodations, nondiscrimination, and breastfeeding promotion.
- Advocating for national paid family leave and workplace accommodation legislation including the FAMILY Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.
- Promoting policies and practices that address Social Determinants of Health to help reduce health inequities related to housing, transportation, environmental health, food insecurity and access to nutritional foods.
- Ensuring coverage of immunizations and supporting efforts by federal agencies and Congress to address vaccine hesitancy and dispel misinformation about immunizations that endanger the public health.

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### IMPROVE RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE

March of Dimes advocates for innovative medical research and robust health surveillance programs, which are essential to discovering ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat maternal and child health conditions, track occurrence, and promote health equity.

#### Tier 1:

- Supporting federal and state legislation to protect and enhance newborn screening, ensure every state tests each newborn for all conditions on the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP) by enacting the Newborn Screenings Saves Lives Reauthorization Act.
- Promoting surveillance and research on key maternal and child health priorities, including birth defects, preterm birth, health disparities, maternal depression, and infant and maternal mortality.
- Support funding for National Institute of Health (NIH) and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to continue maternal, child and infant health research and data collection.

#### Tier 2:

- Ensuring the creation of the authorized interagency task force on infant mortality.
- Continuing to champion funding for pre-term birth research at CDC.
- Promoting research to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and their health care providers know what medications are safe for them and their infants by advancing the recommendations of the Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (PRGLAC).



### PROTECT MOMS AND BABIES DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

March of Dimes is working to meet the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and fight for pregnant women, infants and their families to remain as healthy as possible during the public health crisis.

#### Tier 1:

- Ensuring the unique needs of pregnant women, new mothers, and infants are prioritized in our nation's response to COVID-19.
- Ensuring affordable coverage and access to diagnostic testing, treatment, and vaccinations once available without fear of out-of-pocket costs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supporting the nation's nonprofit sector by working to expand the SBA *Paycheck Protection Program* (PPP) to ensure all nonprofits serving communities qualify by eliminating the 500-employee cap for the 501(c)(3) nonprofits seeking the small business loans, and make other assistance such as the Federal Reserve's *Main Street Lending Program* more accessible to nonprofits.

#### Tier 2:

- Encouraging Congress to invest more in the nation's public health infrastructure including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state, local, tribal and territorial core public health infrastructure to ensure we are prepared us for the next public health emergency.
- Supporting the CDC's *Emerging Threats to Moms and Babies* initiative to provide real-time clinical and survey data from all states and jurisdictions on the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and their babies.
- Advocating for families struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic by improving emergency paid sick days and paid leave policies, increasing access to nutrition programs, and strengthening home visiting programs.