



Advocacy & Government Affairs 2019 Priorities



March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies. March of Dimes advocates for maternal and child health in access to care, research and surveillance and promotes good health and birth outcomes. Through our advocacy work at the federal, state, and local level, we promote health equity by addressing social determinants of health, structural racism and bias so every pregnancy and every baby can be healthy.

Ensuring Access to Health Care

All women, children and families need access to quality health insurance and health care to build and maintain health. March of Dimes advocates for access to quality and affordable **private health insurance** (e.g. through employers and Marketplaces) and **public health coverage** (such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program), as well as other programs that provide key health care services, like the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant and Vaccines for Children. March of Dimes also works to expand access to health care for women, children and families, such as by addressing maternity care deserts.

In 2019, key priorities are:

- Protecting access to quality health insurance, including coverage for people with pre-existing conditions and the requirement that all plans cover maternity and newborn care
- Expanding access to Medicaid, including extending coverage for mothers after childbirth
- Improving access to group prenatal care through enhanced payment and other efforts

Supporting Healthy Women and Healthy Babies

Healthy women are more likely to have healthy babies. March of Dimes supports a broad range of policies and programs to promote health, improve health equity, and prevent disease such as **substance use disorder prevention and treatment** (including opioids and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome); **maternal and infant mortality prevention; immunizations** (including development of new vaccines for emerging threats); maternal mental health; **patient safety** (e.g. perinatal collaboratives); **nutrition and breastfeeding**; and **environmental health**.

In 2019, key priorities are:

- Preventing maternal mortality through maternal mortality review committees, improved data collection, and related efforts, with a focus on health equity

- Preventing preterm birth and reducing disparities through efforts such as tobacco prevention and cessation, birth spacing, and access to 17P
- Advancing policies to support mothers and reduce health disparities in the workplace, such as pregnancy nondiscrimination and breastfeeding promotion

Advancing Research and Surveillance

Health research and surveillance are essential to discovering ways to prevent, diagnose and treat maternal and child health conditions, track the occurrence of diseases and disorders, and promote health equity. March of Dimes advocates for **innovative medical research** and **robust health surveillance programs** like those at the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state health agencies.

In 2019, key priorities are:

- Passing the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act and ensuring every state tests each newborn for every condition on the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP), provides appropriate follow-up care to identified infants, and maintains a robust birth defects surveillance system
- Promoting research to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and their health care providers know what medications are safe for them and their infants

Nonprofit Organizations

March of Dimes advocates on issues important to the operation of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, such as charitable contributions and postal rates.