

# IMPROVING MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

## Problem

A mother's mental health is directly connected to her physical health and the health of her baby. Many women experience mental health challenges during pregnancy and the postpartum period, such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. Mental health issues are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, and when left untreated, maternal mental health disorders can have serious medical, societal and economic consequences.

## Background

- Mental health issues are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth.
- Approximately 1 in 7 women experience postpartum depression, and 1 in 10 experience postpartum anxiety.
- March of Dimes has identified five key elements that are critical to addressing and improving maternal mental health.
  - Access to and insurance coverage for all types of mental health care
  - Universal screening of all pregnant and postpartum women
  - Referral to behavioral health providers for treatment
  - Public education on the prevalence of maternal mental health issues that focuses on normalizing the stress new parents face and stigma reduction strategies.
  - And robust funding to support tracking maternal mental health disorders, as well as data collection on maternal mental health screening initiatives and treatment outcomes.
- Untreated maternal mental health disorders cost the U.S. an estimated \$14.2 billion in 2017.
- Evidence suggests that rates of maternal mental health disorders are increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Solution and Policy Ask

- March of Dimes **STATE** supports **BILL**, which would **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BILL**
- **BILL** will also ensure...
- As a fierce advocate for the health of all moms and babies, I ask for your support on **BILL** to ensure women stay mentally healthy while pregnant and after childbirth.