

2021 MEDICAL STUDENT ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

MATERNAL HEALTH AND MORTALITY

The American Medical Association is committed to tackling the issues surrounding maternal mortality and morbidity head on. The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries. Moreover, there is a large, and largely avoidable, racial disparity in maternal deaths: a 2019 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that Black women are 3-4 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. This increasing rate of maternal mortality, which disproportionately harms our country's Black communities, is extremely concerning and exists at the intersection of racial and gender discrimination.

The AMA supports the "Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA's) Act," re-introduced by Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL-2) and Senator Durbin (D-IL), which would improve data collection, disseminate information on effective interventions, and expand access to health care and social services for postpartum women. Specifically, the MOMMA's Act seeks to implement strategies to combat the disproportionate impact of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity on women of color.

Some of the provisions within this bill that would work to accomplish this goal include providing a grant through the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) directing widespread adoption and implementation of maternal safety bundles, awarding cooperative agreements for the establishment or support of regional centers of excellence addressing implicit bias, cultural competency, and respectful care practices, and expanding Medicaid/CHIP coverage for mothers up to 12 months post-partum.

The AMA understands that there are a multitude of considerations necessary to address this epidemic, such as: a lack of insurance or inadequate coverage prior to, during, and after pregnancy; closures of maternity units in many rural and urban communities; and a lack of inter-professional teams trained in best practices.

There are concrete actions that should be taken to reduce and prevent rising rates of maternal mortality and serious or near-fatal maternal morbidity in the United States. We urge policy makers to:

- Expand Medicaid and CHIP coverage to 12-months post-partum.
- Increase support for Maternal Mortality Review Committees.
- Implement equitable standardized data collection methods.
- Expand access to medical and mental health care and social services for post-partum women.
- Continue to develop a health care workforce that is diverse in background and experience.
- Address shortcomings in our institutions.
- Adopt standards to ensure respectful, safe, and quality care before, during, and after delivery.

ASK: Please urge your Senators and your Representative to cosponsor the MOMMA's Act (S. 411 /H.R. 1350).