

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

Resolution HHS-23-21

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO MATERNAL HEALTH

WHEREAS, every person should be entitled to dignity and respect during and after pregnancy and childbirth, and patients should receive the best care possible regardless of age, race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, citizenship, nationality, immigration status, primary language, or language proficiency;

WHEREAS, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world, where about 700 women die each year from childbirth and another 50,000 suffer from severe complications;

WHEREAS, according to the North Carolina Maternal Mortality Review and Prevention Committee, sixty-three percent (63%) of all maternal deaths in 2014-2015 were determined to be preventable; and black women are at increased risk to die from pregnancy complications compared to white women;

WHEREAS, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that the majority of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable;

WHEREAS, pregnancy-related deaths among black birthing people are also more likely to be miscoded;

WHEREAS, access to prenatal care, socioeconomic status, and general physical health do not fully explain the disparity seen in maternal mortality and morbidity rates among black individuals, and there is a growing body of evidence that black people are often treated unfairly and unequally in the health care system;

WHEREAS, implicit bias is a key driver of health disparities in communities of color;

WHEREAS, health care providers in many states are not required to undergo any implicit bias testing or training;

WHEREAS, currently there does not exist any system to track the number of incidents where implicit prejudice and implicit stereotypes led to negative birth and maternal health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of this State to reduce the effects of implicit bias in pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care so that all people are treated with dignity and respect by their health care providers.

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) believes that it is our duty as public servants to enact legislation that will improve maternal health outcomes and eliminate these health disparities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL believes that each state should examine how to implement training for implicit biases within each state, specifically as it relates to maternal care; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

Resolution ID: HHS-23-21

Sponsored by: Sen. Sen. Natalie Murdock (NC)

Policy Committee: Health and Human Services (HHS)