



## Combating the Maternal Health Crisis

### Take Action to Reduce the Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Crisis

Despite overall improvements in U.S. maternal health, significant health disparities persist for Black mothers. Black mothers are more than [three times](#)<sup>1</sup> as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes compared to other racial and ethnic groups, more than [twice](#)<sup>2</sup> as likely to experience severe maternal morbidity, and [1.5 times](#)<sup>3</sup> more likely to deliver preterm. They are disproportionately affected by underlying [chronic conditions](#) such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, which heighten risks for pregnancy-related complications.<sup>4</sup> Cardiovascular disease is the [leading cause](#) of maternal death nationally and is especially fatal for Black women.<sup>5</sup> Conditions such as postpartum cardiomyopathy—a type of heart failure—and blood pressure disorders like [preeclampsia](#), which Black mothers are 60% more likely to develop than their White peers, drive these disparities.<sup>6</sup> Those with complications face [twice](#)<sup>7</sup> the risk of stroke or heart attack and carry greater [long-term health risks](#)<sup>8</sup> such as Type 2 diabetes. Nearly 80% of these adverse outcomes are [preventable](#)<sup>9</sup> and closing the Black maternal health mortality gap could [save](#) as many as 3,100 Black mothers by 2040.<sup>10</sup>

These inequities stem from complex, multifactorial causes. Contributing factors include, but are not limited to, [lack of access](#) to high-quality prenatal and postpartum care,<sup>11</sup> gaps in [insurance coverage](#),<sup>12</sup> [food and income insecurity](#),<sup>13</sup> and experiences with [racism and discrimination](#).<sup>14</sup> Shortages of culturally concordant providers also exacerbate the problem: Black physicians account for only [5%](#)<sup>15</sup> of the workforce despite representing nearly 13% of the U.S. population, with [similar gaps](#)<sup>16</sup> among midwives and labor delivery nurses. Federal policy solutions must address this interplay of factors and comprehensively address the disproportionate risks and poor outcomes faced by Black mothers and their children nationwide.

### Federal Policy Solutions to Combat the Maternal Health Crisis

Introduced in the 118th Congress, the bicameral Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act ("Omnibus") is model legislation aimed at addressing the maternal health crisis.<sup>17</sup> The bill proposes a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to ensuring accessible, high-quality, affordable, and culturally concordant care throughout pregnancy. Key reforms include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding access to remote patient monitoring tools and virtual care services to improve maternal health care
- Growing the perinatal workforce to ensure access to culturally concordant maternity care
- Investing in social determinants of health that impact maternal health outcomes such as housing, transportation, and nutrition
- Extending WIC in the postpartum and breastfeeding periods
- Funding community-based organizations working to improve maternal health outcomes
- Increasing resources for moms with mental health and substance use disorders
- Improving maternal health data collection and research

**ENDORSEMENT:** The Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) calls upon Congress to act swiftly to advance comprehensive legislation, like the Omnibus, that will improve health outcomes of mothers and children across the nation.

**About ABC:** Founded in 1974, ABC is a nonprofit organization with a global membership, including health professionals, community health advocates, and institutional members. The Association's mission is to promote the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease (CVD), including stroke, in Black populations and other groups facing barriers to optimal health. Through education, research, partnerships, and advocacy, the Association works to advance cardiovascular health and improve outcomes in communities nationwide.

---

<sup>1</sup> Working Together to Reduce Black Maternal Mortality. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). April 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/womens-health/features/maternal-mortality.html>

<sup>2</sup> Closing the Coverage Gap Would Improve Black Maternal Health. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. July 2021. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-the-coverage-gap-would-improve-black-maternal-health>

<sup>3</sup> Explaining the Black-White Disparity in Preterm Birth: A Consensus Statement From a Multi-Disciplinary Scientific Work Group Convened by the March of Dimes. Frontiers in Reproductive Health. September 2021. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9580804/>

<sup>4</sup> Health of Black or African American non-Hispanic Population. CDC. July 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/black-health.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Heart Disease and Stroke in Black Women. American Heart Association. February 2025.

<https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/about-heart-disease-in-women/facts/heart-disease-in-black-women>

<sup>6</sup> Preeclampsia Foundation Racial Disparities Task Force Creates Action Plan. Preeclampsia Foundation. November 2024. <https://www.preeclampsia.org/the-news/community-support/preeclampsia-foundation-racial-disparities-task-force-creates-action-plan>

<sup>7</sup> Heart Disease and Stroke. Preeclampsia Foundation. August 2025. <https://www.preeclampsia.org/heart-disease-stroke>

<sup>8</sup> Racial/Ethnic Differences in Diabetes Screening and Hyperglycemia Among US Women After Gestational Diabetes. CDC. October 2019.

[https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/19\\_0144.htm#:~:text=Racial%2Fethnic%20disparities%20in%20risk.Hispanic%20white%20women%20\(9\).](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/19_0144.htm#:~:text=Racial%2Fethnic%20disparities%20in%20risk.Hispanic%20white%20women%20(9).)

<sup>9</sup> Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data From Maternal Mortality Review Committees in 36 U.S. States, 2017–2019. CDC. May 2024. [https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/mmr/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/](https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/mmr/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/)

<sup>10</sup> Closing The Maternal Health Gap: A Path To Save Lives And Livelihoods. Forbes. September 2025.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelleystewart/2025/09/18/closing-the-maternal-health-gap-a-path-to-save-lives-and-livelihoods/>

<sup>11</sup> Black Maternal Mortality-The Elephant in the Room. World Journal of Gynecology and Women's Health. July 2020. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7384760/>

<sup>12</sup> Social Determinants of Health Metrics for Black Women by State. National Women's Law Center. May 2023. <https://nwlrc.org/resource/social-determinants-of-health-metrics-for-black-women-by-state/>

<sup>13</sup> Examining the Influence of Food Insecurity on Perinatal Health Outcomes Among Black Birthing Individuals in the U.S.: A Systematic Scoping Review. Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. March 2025.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40042795/>

<sup>14</sup> Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health: Current Status and Efforts to Address Them. KFF. October 2024. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-current-status-and-efforts-to-address-them/>

<sup>15</sup> Report highlights lack of medical worker diversity – and how to fix that. American Heart Association.

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2023/01/05/report-highlights-lack-of-medical-worker-diversity-and-how-to-fix-that>

<sup>16</sup> The Impact of Racism and Midwifery's Lack of Racial Diversity: A Literature Review. Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health. November 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27926804/>

<sup>17</sup> Background on the Momnibus Act. Black Maternal Health Caucus. <https://blackmaternalhealthcaucus-underwood.house.gov/Momnibus>