



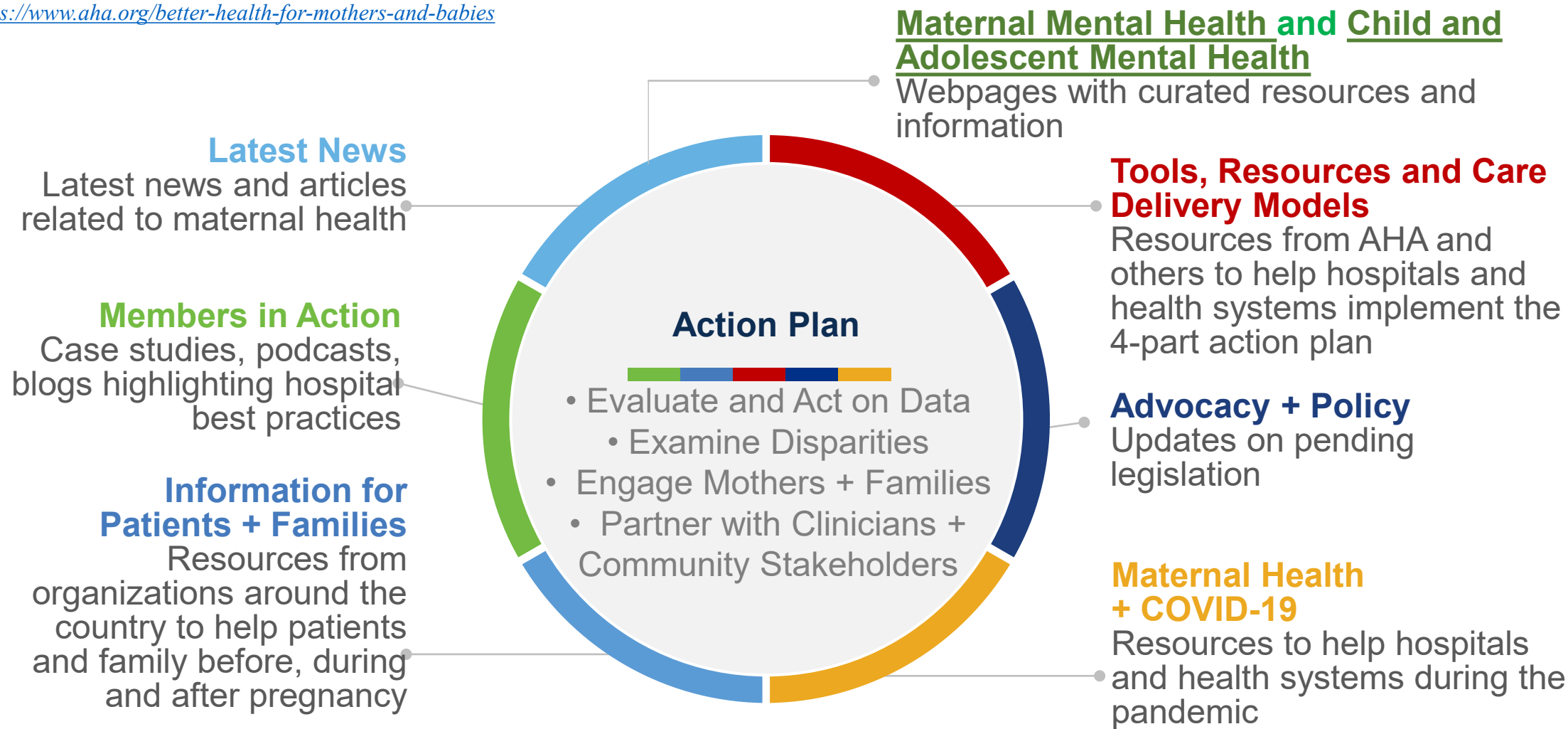
*Advancing Health in America*

# ***Maternal and Child Health Efforts***

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# Better Health for Mothers and Babies

<https://www.aha.org/better-health-for-mothers-and-babies>



# Federal Public Policy and Legislative Solutions for Improving Maternal Health

## **Federal Public Policy and Legislative Solutions for Improving Maternal Health August 2023**

Maternal health is a top priority for the AHA and our member hospitals and health systems; and our initial efforts are aimed at eliminating maternal mortality and reducing severe morbidity. As hospitals work to improve health outcomes, we are redoubling our efforts to improve maternal health across the continuum of care and reaching out to community partners to aid in this important effort. The AHA continues to support a strong federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unwinding of the public health emergency. At risk populations, such as pregnant women, should remain a key priority in our concerted effort to address this health care crisis.

The causes of maternal mortality and morbidity are complex, including lack of consistent access to comprehensive care and persistent racial disparities in health and health care. To help improve maternal health, we support the federal public policy and legislative actions discussed below.

### **INITIATIVES**

At the federal level, a number of legislative initiatives specific to maternal mortality have been enacted and introduced in the last year.

#### **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (Public Law No: 117-328)**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, passed in December 2022, contained important maternal and child health provisions supported by the AHA. The legislation permanently granted states the option to provide 12 months of postpartum coverage to women rather than coverage for 60 days. Previously, states were able to exercise this coverage option, but only through 2027. States choosing this option must provide the full Medicaid benefit for pregnant and postpartum individuals during the 12-month postpartum period. To date, 37 states and the District of Columbia have implemented the coverage extension<sup>1</sup>.

The legislation provided funding for several programs addressing mental illness, substance use disorder (SUD) and crisis response for maternal mental health. The legislation also required updates to Medicaid policies for mental health, including requiring a searchable directory of providers and guidance from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on access to crisis response networks under Medicaid. In addition, \$24 million was allocated for five years for a program to award screening and treatment for maternal mental health and SUD grants to states to establish, improve or maintain programs for screening, assessment and treatment services for women who are postpartum, pregnant, or have given birth within the preceding 12 months, for maternal mental health and SUDs. The Department of Health

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-postpartum-coverage-extension-tracker/>

# Partnerships

- AIM/ACOG [Patient Safety Bundles](#)
- March of Dimes [Awareness to Action: Dismantling Bias in Maternal and Infant Healthcare](#)
- [CDC Pediatric Vaccine Grant](#)
- CDC Million Hearts 2027
- The Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health
- AAMC, IHI, Premier



# Toxic: A Black Woman's Story

- 20-minute educational film explores factors such as toxic stress, microaggressions and racial inequities and more, that negatively impact Black moms and their birth outcomes.
- Hospitals can use it to start conversations among health care staff, social services professionals, educators, policy makers, women and their families about issues that are critical to improving health equity.
- **Our goal:**
  - Raise awareness through hosting screenings
  - Tips and case examples in [flyer](#), includes Colorado Hospital Association, Atrium Health Navicent, Summa Health
  - The film is [available for purchase](#)
  - AHA member non-profit hospitals **only** receive a discount, email [saisha@aha.org](mailto:saisha@aha.org) to learn more.
  - All proceeds will provide healing support resources for families in Cuyahoga County, Ohio



**TOXIC**  
A BLACK WOMAN'S STORY  
A film depicting the reality of a day in a Black pregnant woman's life.

"I wish what was represented in the film was fiction or embellished, but it is reality."  
– Health Care Leader

**B**lack women and their babies have historically endured racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality. In addition to that, structural racism and implicit bias further threatens their health. Hospitals and health care providers are increasingly recognizing the impact of structural racism and implicit bias on maternal health. To foster productive conversation, the American Hospital Association is encouraging hospitals and health systems to use the short film **Toxic: A Black Woman's Story** as an educational tool. Developed by First Year Cleveland's Pregnancy and Infant Loss Committee and the Healthy Neighborhoods Committee of Healthy Cleveland, the film tells the story of Nina, a Black, pregnant, affluent lawyer, to bring awareness to the daily, multi-layered stressors, biases and microaggressions that drive inequitable maternal and infant mortality rates for Black women. A corresponding discussion guide facilitates solution-driven conversations about how health care organizations can address structural racism.

**FACTS**

- Every year, **50,000 women** suffer a severe maternal complication during labor and delivery, while **700** die from giving birth.<sup>1</sup>
- Black women are **three to four times more likely** to experience a pregnancy-related death than their white counterpart, and five times more likely even with a college education.<sup>2</sup>
- More than **80%** of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable, and mental health is the prominent cause.<sup>3</sup>
- Infant mortality and pre-term births are **disproportionately higher** in Black babies and moms.<sup>4</sup>

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/disparities-pregnancy-related-deaths/#topographic.html>  
2. [Ibid](#)  
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0219-pregnancy-related-deaths.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/s0505-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>  
4. <https://www.hhs.gov/reports-and-statistics/section/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-and-womens-health/>

**CONSIDERATIONS TO EXPLORE**

Screening "Toxic" creates space for individuals from all backgrounds to share perspectives and strategies to transform Black maternal health. The AHA has facilitated viewing of the film for a variety of health care organizations. Below are some considerations health care organizations can explore to provide more equitable maternal health care:

<p><b>Leadership Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain leadership buy-in early on.</li><li>• Advocate and support change, but recognize change takes time.</li><li>• Collaborate beyond traditional partners around equity as the common mission.</li><li>• Host conversations with grass roots initiatives, community members and stakeholders and members to build consciousness of layered issues people encounter.</li></ul>	<p><b>Systemic Changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build diversity in the workforce.</li><li>• Hold team members accountable for designing and implementing solutions.</li><li>• Integrate training on implicit bias such as <b>Awareness to Action: Dismantling Bias in Maternal and Infant Healthcare™</b>, active listening, culturally competent care, sensitive conversations, to build consciousness of issues one maybe unaware of.</li><li>• Train providers in conducting sensitive conversations with patients, as described in <b>Screening for Social Needs: Guiding Care Teams to Engage Patients</b>.</li></ul>	<p><b>Personal Behavior Changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess and understand your own implicit biases.</li><li>• Practice empathy and introspection in patient and peer encounters.</li><li>• Learn to advocate in the moment of injustice, and hold yourself accountable.</li><li>• Encourage people to tell their stories and listen.</li><li>• Value lived experiences as a data point to better understand a person's overall health.</li></ul>
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# Beyond Birth

Podcast series explores the medical complications that can accompany pregnancy, successful prenatal and postpartum treatment programs, and how hospitals and health systems are addressing the social needs of new mothers.

- [The Social Needs of New Mothers With Ascension](#)
- [Understanding Perinatal Depression With UMass Memorial Health](#)
- [Navigating Perinatal Depression With Endeavor Health](#)
- [Matters of the Heart with Orlando Health](#)

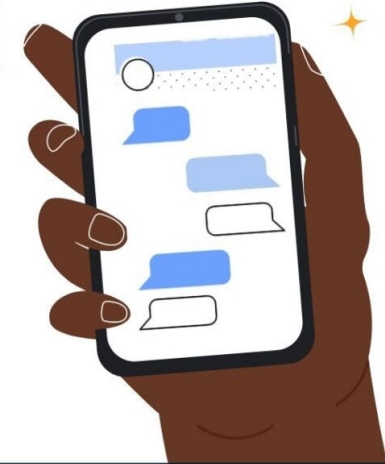




# National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

- **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)**
- Free, confidential, 24/7 mental health support for moms and their families before, during, and after pregnancy. English- and Spanish-speaking counselors are available. Interpreter services supporting 60 other languages.
- [1-833-TLC-MAMA Hotline Partner Toolkit](#)
- AHA Podcast: [You're Not Alone: Supporting New Moms With the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#)

**You're not alone.**



**For Support, Understanding, and Resources,  
CALL OR TEXT 1-833-9-HELP4MOMS  
1-833-943-5746**

**Free - Confidential - Available 24/7**



# Resources

## Best Practices for Equitable Maternal Care

Many health care, community and systemic influences, such as access to care, chronic conditions, socioeconomic conditions, implicit bias and structural racism, contribute to disparate maternal health outcomes in women of color.

Health care organizations are uniquely positioned to design pregnancy and postpartum care that can help to address these influences and provide more equitable patient care.



### FAST FACTS

- Maternal mortality rates increased by nearly 40% since 2020.
- Black women are 3x more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death.
- Black and Indigenous women are 2-3x more likely to experience a maternal mental health condition but less likely to receive care.
- Prevalence of hypertensive disorders is higher in women of color.

### RESOURCES

- AHA Webinar: Examining Best Practices for Equitable Maternal Care
- Awareness to Action: Dismantling Bias in Maternal and Infant Healthcare™
- Hear Her Campaign: Tools for Health Care Professionals
- Screening for Social Needs: Guiding Care Teams to Engage Patients
- Understanding Biases in Black Maternal Health with Toxic

Health care leaders shared with the AHA ways organizations can foster equitable practices in maternal care

Individual Level	Systemic Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen and document social needs</li> <li>• Practice empathy to understand social context of the patient</li> <li>• Create a safe environment by listening and having sensitive conversations</li> <li>• Recognize and respect patient preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate maternal health equity as a quality improvement effort, and instill reliable processes, such as high-risk huddles and debriefs</li> <li>• Implement standard practices to educate, identify and respond to maternal warning signs and obstetric emergencies.</li> <li>• Offer trainings on diversity and inclusion, shared decision-making, cultural competency and implicit bias</li> <li>• Build an infrastructure to identify, respond and follow-up on a patient's social needs</li> <li>• Diversify workforce to include patient navigators, social workers, community health workers, doulas, midwives, behavioral health specialists, etc.</li> <li>• Establish an open line of communication within internal care team members and external community partner</li> <li>• Collaborate with diverse community members and organizations to co-create equitable solutions.</li> </ul>

AHA Better Health for Mothers and Babies



## Improving Maternal Mental Health Outcomes

**1 IN 5** women experience a **PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION**<sup>1</sup> such as depression and anxiety



Mental health conditions account for **9% OF PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS**<sup>6</sup>, and suicide accounts for **20% OF POSTPARTUM DEATHS**<sup>7</sup>

Over **50%** of pregnant women with depression are **UNTREATED**<sup>3</sup>, further impacting mother and child

**1 IN 8** women have symptoms of **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**<sup>2</sup>

Black and Indigenous women are **2-3X MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**, but less likely to receive care<sup>8,9,10</sup>

**1 IN 10** fathers experience **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION** or **ANXIETY**<sup>4</sup>



In 2019, maternal mental health conditions were the **LEADING CAUSE OF PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS**<sup>5</sup>



## Prioritizing the Mental Health of Mothers and Families

BETTER HEALTH FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES

### PRIORITIZING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND FAMILIES

[www.aha.org/better-health-for-mothers-and-babies](http://www.aha.org/better-health-for-mothers-and-babies)  
[www.aha.org/maternal-mental-health](http://www.aha.org/maternal-mental-health)

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are the single largest complication of pregnancy and childbirth.

### 5 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Timely screening, assessment and intervention, pre- and postpartum	Integrate mental health throughout all aspects of care	Ask patients and families about the care they received	Offer certified training on mental health to support providers	Create a culture of mental health awareness and support

### COMMON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Connect individuals with adequate mental health resources	Address stigma associated with mental illness and treatment	Offer virtual services integrating mental health in all care settings	Establish support groups for patients and families

The American Hospital Association prioritizes work that improves the health of mothers and babies. There is much being done today in hospitals and health systems across the country, and there is much more we must do, particularly for women and families of color. [Find additional resources](#), including case studies, podcasts and webinars, and learn more about this urgent issue.



1. Podcast | [Raising Maternal Mental Health](#)  
2. Webinar | [Closing Mental Well-Being for Mothers and Families](#)

## Best Practices for Equitable Maternal Care

## Improving Maternal Outcomes Starts with Knowing Why



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# Other Resources

- [2023 Synopsis](#)
- Blogs
- Bi-monthly newsletter
- Infographics
- Convenings and Virtual Events

<https://www.aha.org/better-health-for-mothers-and-babies>

# Maternal and Child Health Resources

## 2023 Synopsis

Explore AHA's Better Health for Mothers and Babies initiative resources, highlighting hospitals and health systems improving maternal and child health outcomes, produced in 2023.



**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

# ACCELERATING HEALTH EQUITY CONFERENCE

**DRIVING CHANGE TOGETHER**

**MAY 7 - 9, 2024 | KANSAS CITY, MO**



<https://equityconference.aha.org>

**2024**  
**AHA**  
**Health**  
**Equity**  
**Innovation**  
**Summits**

[equity.aha.org](https://equity.aha.org)



**SAVE THE DATE!**

# **Taking Action to Reduce Maternal and Child Health Disparities**

Create solutions to address health inequities that exist within the maternal and child health space in communities across the country.

**May 22, 2024 | 9:30 a.m – 3:30 p.m. CT**

**Christian Hospital**

11133 Dunn Rd, St. Louis, MO

# Thank you!

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