



# Mama+ Health Policy Agenda

## 2022

### Maternal Health Disparities

Maternal health is an indicator of the health of a nation. The United States (US) has some of the worst maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates. Compared to other developed nations, the US has the worst rates.<sup>1</sup> While maternal mortality rates are decreasing in many other countries, rates in the US are increasing.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the rising rates, adverse pregnancy outcomes impact non-latinx Black birthing people at rates significantly higher than birthing people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>

Louisiana follows the national trend of maternal mortality. Similar to the US compared to other countries, LA has one of the highest maternal mortality rates amongst other states.<sup>4</sup> Black women are four times more likely than White women to experience a pregnancy-related death. This remains true despite factors, such as income level, education level, insurance status, or perinatal care. These disparities in maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity are greatly due to racism.

### What is the Mama+ Health Policy Agenda?

The Mama+ Health Policy Agenda is a policy focused initiative aimed at addressing the maternal health emergency and closing maternal health gaps for Black birthing people in New Orleans and Louisiana. Loosely structured after the [Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2020](#), a federal legislative package created to address the national Black maternal health crisis, the Mama+ Health Policy Agenda will comprise local and state level policy. Recommendations from state-led initiatives, such as mortality review committees, and issues identified by lay people are uplifted in the titles of the policy agenda. The 2022 version builds upon the efforts and successes of the [2021 Mama+ Health Policy Agenda](#). Comprised of 7 titles, the aims of the policy initiative is to address areas that most impact the health and birth outcomes of Black birthing people in Louisiana. The titles are listed below.

- Address social determinants of health that affect maternal health outcomes.
- Diversify and increase perinatal workforce.
- Invest in maternal mental health care and substance use disorder treatments.
- Improve telehealth and other digital tools to provide maternal health care to underserved areas.
- Increase payment for group prenatal care.
- Address abortion access and reproductive rights issues.

### Why New Orleans?

Under the Merck for Mothers' [Safer Childbirth Cities Initiative](#) grant Birthmark Doula Collective, Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES), and National Birth Equity Collaborative (NBEC) joined together to help improve maternal health for Black birthing people in the New Orleans Area. The grant was specifically awarded to help support the maternal health work of organizations in metropolitan areas, New Orleans being one of them. Although New Orleans is the focus of the Mama+ Health Policy Agenda, associated state-level initiatives will impact all birthing people and communities in Louisiana. It is our hope that the Mama+ Health Policy Agenda will serve as a blueprint and encourage organizations in other municipalities in their maternal health-related policy endeavors.

1 National Public Radio: [The Last Person You'd Expect to Die in Childbirth](#)

2 National Public Radio: [U.S Has the Worst Rate of Maternal Deaths in the Developed World](#)

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System](#)

4 America's Health Rankings: [Maternal Mortality in Louisiana](#)





# Key Legislation

**HB 784-Rep. Royce Duplessis**  
*Universal Mood Disorder Screening*

**HB 650/651-Rep. Stephanie Hilferty**  
*Human Donor Milk Insurance Coverage*

**SB 175/ HB 543- Sen. Regina Barrow & Rep. Joseph Stagni**  
*Provides Exemptions to Collaborative Practice Agreement Requirements*

**HB 557-Representative Matt Willard**  
*12 Month Supply of Contraceptive Coverage*

**HB 516-Rep. Mandy Landry**  
*Support for High School Pregnant Persons and Parents*

**Paid Family Leave**  
HB 995-Rep. Sam Jenkins  
HB 1003-Rep. Barbara Carpenter  
HB 945-Rep. Stephanie Hilferty

**Paid Sick Days**  
SB 289-Sen. Regina Barrow

**HB 90-Rep. C. Denise Marcelle**  
*Establishes the Office of Women's Health*

**HB 41-Rep. Candace Newell**  
*Crown Act*

**SB 268-Sen. Beth Mizell**  
*Opioids treatment for pregnant women*

**Voting Rights Bills-SB 343, HB 720, HB 680**