

# The Moms Matter Act

MASSACHUSETTS MIND THE GAP COALITION



An act to expand equitable perinatal mental health services or the **Massachusetts Moms Matter Act (H.1984/S.1261)** would establish two grant programs to **grow and diversify the state's perinatal\* mental health (PMH) workforce and invest in community-based organizations supporting perinatal people**. Modeled on federal legislation of the same name, this bill **addresses our state's urgent PMH care crisis, focusing on Black and Brown families most impacted by perinatal health disparities**.

\*The period of time from pregnancy up until one year following birth.

**Lead sponsors:** Sen. Liz Miranda and Rep. Brandy Fluker Oakley

## ***To expand the PMH workforce, the Moms Matter Act would:***

- Support new or existing schools or programs for **professionals seeking licensing or certification in mental health who will specialize in PMH or substance use disorders (SUDs)**, such as **Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, and peer specialists**. Provides programmatic and/or scholarship support to expand capacity.
- Prioritize schools and programs **committed to recruiting and retaining faculty and students from medically underserved populations and maternal health care deserts**.
- Require that schools and programs include **training on implicit bias and racism**, and have a plan to **recruit and retain students who will practice in areas with significant racial, ethnic, or rural disparities in perinatal health outcomes**.

## ***In the community, the Moms Matter Act would:***

- Support a range of programs that improve mental health and wellbeing for perinatal people, including **group prenatal care, PMH and SUD care, programs that improve PMH integration into primary care, suicide prevention programs, home visiting programs, programs providing support for pregnancy and infant loss**, and more.
- Fund programs at eligible entities including **nonprofits, maternity care providers, behavioral health care providers, public health departments, domestic violence shelters, and free-standing birth centers**.
- Prioritize **medically underserved populations, culturally congruent care, and partnerships with community-based organizations**.

## **ABOUT PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH (PMH) CONDITIONS\*\***

- PMH conditions are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, impacting over 20,000 families each year in Massachusetts.
- PMH conditions include depression, anxiety, bipolar illness, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorder, and in rare cases, postpartum psychosis.
- Suicide and overdose combined are the leading cause of death for women in the first year following pregnancy.
- COVID-19 fueled a threefold increase in the rates of PMH conditions.
- Untreated PMH conditions can have long-term negative impacts on parents, infants, families, and society.
- Individuals who face racial or economic inequities are more likely to experience PMH conditions but are less likely to receive care.

\*\*Research compiled by the Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance.

## Endorsing Organizations

Accompany Doula Care	Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health
Bay State Birth Coalition*	Massachusetts Association of Health Plans
Better Beginnings Birth Services	Massachusetts Doula Coalition
Brazelton Touchpoints Center	Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
Cape and Islands Maternal Depression Task Force*	Massachusetts Medical Society
Charlene Fraser, Inc.	Massachusetts Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression*	Massachusetts Section of the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics, and Neonatal Nurses
The EMA Project*	Mass. PPD Fund*
Fathers' UpLift	North Shore Postpartum Help
Golden Flor Wellness*	Nurses for Black Maternal Health and Equity Organization*
GPS Group Peer Support	Propa City Community Outreach*
Health Care for All	Resolve New England
HELD Doula Services	Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Lifeline for Families Center at UMass Chan Medical School	Springfield Community-Based Doula Initiative
March of Dimes*	Women of Color Health Equity Collective*
Massachusetts Affiliate of American College of Nurse Midwives	Vital Village Networks

\*Massachusetts Mind the Gap Coalition Steering Committee Member