

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

Bay State Birth Coalition*

Better Beginnings Birth Services

Cape and Islands Maternal Depression Task Force*

Charlene Fraser, Inc.

Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression*

The EMA Project*

Fathers' UpLift

Golden Flor Wellness*

GPS Group Peer Support

Health Care for All

HELD Doula Services

Lifeline for Families Center at UMass Chan Medical School

March of Dimes*

Massachusetts Affiliate of American College of Nurse Midwives

Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health

Massachusetts Doula Coalition

Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association

Massachusetts Medical Society

Massachusetts Section of the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics, and Neonatal Nurses

Mass. PPD Fund*

North Shore Postpartum Help

Nurses for Black Maternal Health and Equity Organization*

Propa City Community Outreach*

Resolve New England

Springfield Community-Based Doula Initiative

Women of Color Health Equity Collective*

Vital Village Networks

*Massachusetts Mind the Gap Coalition Steering Committee Member

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