

Urge Legislators to Support Maternal Mortality Review Board Legislation

To New York State Legislators:

As a diverse group of organizations committed to enhancing the health of all New Yorkers, we urge the Legislature to establish in statute and invest in a Maternal Mortality Review Board (MMRB) during the 2019 session.


New York currently ranks 30th out of 50 states in its maternal death rate. The issue is compounded by significant racial and ethnic disparities with black women nearly four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth compared to white women. Moreover, severe maternal morbidity, serious life-threatening complications of delivery, is even more pervasive.

Development of the maternal mortality review board through statute will provide a deeper understanding of the causes and circumstances surrounding each maternal death. Through convening a multidisciplinary, diverse group of experts, the maternal mortality review board will facilitate a comprehensive, confidential review of maternal deaths and develop actionable recommendations for the prevention of future deaths.

In order for the board to work effectively and make an impact on maternal deaths, the legislation must be reflective of national best practices on maternal mortality reviews that have already been established across the nation. Assembly Bill 10346-A (Joyner - 2018) created the necessary protections for an effective review process and was supported by a diverse group of patient advocates and health care providers.

The diverse group of organizations listed below stand strongly in support of legislation to establish an MMRB that:

- Ensures accountability and sustainability of a maternal mortality review board;
- Ensures the board is diverse, multi-disciplinary and includes experts who serve and are representative of the diversity of women and mothers in medically underserved areas of the state;
- Reflects Centers of Disease Control (CDC) standards to provide confidentiality protections to the board's proceedings to allow for open and honest dialogue and review; and
- Ensures the board reports on aggregate findings and recommendations.

 We call for your leadership to prioritize women's health care and support policy solutions that recognize that even one maternal death in a community is too high a cost to bear. Collectively, our organizations envision a future where no family or community suffers the loss of a mother due to a preventable, pregnancy-related death. The cost of inaction is simply too high a toll on New York's women and families.

Sincerely,

* Required