

# The Moms Matter Act

MASSACHUSETTS MIND THE GAP COALITION



*Act to expand equitable perinatal mental health services* or the **Massachusetts Moms Matter Act** (HD.2965/SD.1736) 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**

Bay State Birth Coalition\*

Better Beginnings Birth Services

Cape and Islands Maternal Depression Task Force\*

Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression\*

The EMA Project\*

Charlene Fraser, Inc.

Golden Flor Wellness\*

HELD Doula Services

Lifeline for Families Center at UMass Chan Medical School

Massachusetts Affiliate of American College of Nurse Midwives

Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health

Massachusetts Doula Coalition

Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association

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\*

\*Massachusetts Mind the Gap Coalition Steering Committee Member

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