

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

CORE MESSAGES

Solution. All expectant parents need access to care during and after pregnancy for both physical and mental health, and families need access to regular well-child visits and screenings that give their babies the best start in life. This is our chance to ensure the next generation grows up healthy and prepared to thrive in school and the workforce.

Problem. Maternal and infant mortality are at a crisis point in the United States. Our systems create and exacerbate racial and economic disparities. Is not built to fully support families or acknowledge the intrinsic link between maternal and infant health – and that costs us in the long run.

Call to action. Policymakers must invest in comprehensive health policies, expanding Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) access during pregnancy and post-partum and for infants, toddlers, and kids, enhancing culturally sensitive care, and supporting early childhood and family services.

MAKING THE CASE

- **Disparities.** More women in the U.S. die during childbirth than in any other developed country. We are the only high-income country whose maternal mortality rate has actually risen over the past two decades. Black women are dying at an alarming rate – more than twice the national average of their counterparts. The disparities pregnant people of color face have a long-lasting impact on their babies. On average, 5.6 in 1,000 babies born in the U.S. will not survive to see their first birthday; mortality is nearly twice as high for Black infants (10.8 in 1,000 babies).
- **Access.** Right now, far too many Mothers and children lack access to the quality care they need. Alarming, the rate of uninsured children is now back on the rise after years of decline. Babies in families with low incomes and babies of color are the least likely to receive preventive health services.



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- **Extend care.** Today, nearly 25% of all U.S. mothers start prenatal care too late in pregnancy or do not receive the recommended number of prenatal visits – this number is even higher for pregnant women of color. To ensure mothers start and end their pregnancies healthy, we must expand access to Medicaid and CHIP during pregnancy and further into postpartum.
 - **Expand care options.** Culturally sensitive models like midwifery, group prenatal care, and doula support can mitigate disparities and improve the quality of care, particularly for people of color, who are discriminated against in the health care system and experience higher rates of disrespect and abuse.
 - **Economic impact.** Health coverage for pregnant parents reduces costly and traumatic outcomes for parents and infants, such as infant mortality and low birth weight. Children with Medicaid coverage have better long-term health, education, and employment outcomes than those uninsured because they can access preventative care, early detection, screenings, and treatment. This greatly reduces costly special education and health interventions as children grow.
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NCIT is here to support your advocacy campaign in a variety of ways to help you plan and execute your campaign. We support advocacy campaigns by mobilizing communities, advancing science and research through communications and messaging expertise, and other forms of capacity building for organizations. We offer tools and resources, connections to partner organizations, one-on-one coaching, and training to organizations advocating for policies that impact expectant parents, infants, toddlers, and their families. Each request starts a conversation – you don't have to have all the details ready. We'll get you connected to the right person! [Connect with us here!](#)