

The United States is Facing a Maternal Mental Health Crisis



1 in 5 Mothers Are Impacted by Mental Health Conditions

Maternal mental health (MMH) conditions are the **MOST COMMON** complication of pregnancy and birth, affecting 800,000 families each year in the U.S.^{1,2}

75% Most Women Are Untreated, Increasing Risk of Negative Impacts

75% of women impacted by MMH conditions **REMAIN UNTREATED**, increasing the risk of long-term negative impacts on mothers, babies, and families.⁴



Military Service Members and Spouses Are High-Risk

MMH conditions affect 36% of female service members and military spouses, and 60% of retired service members.⁶



Mental Health Conditions Are the Leading Cause of Maternal Deaths

Suicide and overdose are the **LEADING CAUSE** of death for women in the first year following pregnancy.³



\$14 Billion: The Cost of Untreated MMH Conditions

The cost of not treating MMH conditions is \$32,000 per mother-infant pair, or **\$14 BILLION** each year in the U.S.⁵



It's Not Just Postpartum Depression: There are a Range of MMH Conditions

MMH conditions can occur during pregnancy and up to one year following pregnancy and include depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar illness, psychosis, and substance use disorders.⁷

MMHLA is Leading Four Policy Initiatives to Address Maternal Mental Health

MMHLA is leading policy initiatives to address the mental health of new parents, including continuing to build out the national maternal mental health infrastructure and providing specific support to military mothers.

1 We are advocating for an increase in funding for the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline.

- The Hotline (1-833-9-HELP4MOMS) provides 24/7 voice and text support to mothers and families impacted by maternal mental health conditions. Since launching on Mother's Day 2022, the Hotline has had more than 12,000 conversations (70% by phone; 30% by text). Help seekers' primary reasons for contacting the Hotline were feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and anxious.
- MMHLA is advocating for an increase of \$3 million for a total of \$10 million in FY24. The increase in funds will help to train Hotline counselors on best practices to support the unique needs of servicemembers, veterans, and military families utilizing the Hotline, and to conduct a public awareness campaign about the Hotline.

2 We are advocating for an increase in funding for state grants focused on screening and treatment of maternal mental health conditions.

- The Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Program was first introduced in 2016 and supported 7 states in the development of perinatal psychiatry access programs. Currently, fewer than 20 states have perinatal psychiatry access programs.
- MMHLA is advocating for an increase of at least \$5 million for a total of a minimum of \$15 million in FY24. The additional funding includes assistance for new perinatal psychiatry access programs, coordination with existing maternal mental health programs, technical assistance for non-grantee states, public awareness, and funding for programs that address disparities and substance issues for mothers and birthing people.

3 We are requesting reports on maternal mental health and active duty military members.

- MMHLA is requesting a report on the number of military treatment facilities (MTFs) offering evidence-based programs proven to prevent perinatal mental health conditions, number of behavioral health specialists integrated into women's clinics and obstetric practices, and resources needed for better behavioral health care integration. This report also includes an update on the new Military Reproductive Behavioral Health Consultation Line.
- MMHLA is requesting a report on the impact of perinatal mental health conditions on military readiness and retention, including data on suicide and overdose, and an evaluation of policies for retention pathways for promotion.

4 We are addressing barriers to care for active duty military members and military spouses.

- MMHLA, in coordination with the Centering Healthcare Institute and What to Expect Project, is advocating for a comprehensive policy to ensure all MTFs have the capacity to successfully facilitate a CenteringPregnancy® program. The U.S. Military recognizes CenteringPregnancy® as an essential service that supports mission readiness by improving maternal mental and physical health as well as strengthening relationships between birthing parents and providers.
- MMHLA is advocating for funding to train primary care managers at MTFs on maternal mental health conditions and how to best educate and screen pregnant and postpartum women and birthing people for these conditions.
- MMHLA is advocating for improved access to clinicians trained in maternal mental health conditions, either through improved manning at MTFs or by increasing telehealth flexibilities.

Citations

1. Fawcett EJ, et al. The Prevalence of Anxiety Disorders During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. 2019; 80(4). doi: <https://doi.org/10.4088/jcp.18r12527>.
2. Gavin NI, et al. Perinatal Depression. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2005;106(5, Part 1):1071-1083. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.aog.0000183597.31630.db>.
3. Trost S, et al. Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data from Maternal Mortality Review Committees in 36 US States, 2017–2019. *CDC*. www.cdc.gov. 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/erase-mm/data-mmrc.html>.
4. Byatt N, et al. Enhancing Participation in Depression Care in Outpatient Perinatal Care Settings. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2015;126(5):1048-1058. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1097/aog.0000000000001067>.
5. Luca DL, et al. Financial Toll of Untreated Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Among 2017 Births in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2020; 110(6):888-896. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2020.305619>.
6. United States Government Accountability Office, Defense Health Care, Prevalence of and Efforts to Screen and Treat Mental Health Conditions in Prenatal and Postpartum TRICARE Beneficiaries. 2022. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105136.pdf>.
7. Postpartum Support International. 2023. <https://www.postpartum.net/learn-more/>.