



# POLICY NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 | February 2021

## BILL MA H.4818

### An Act to Reduce Racial Inequities in Maternal Health

**Status:** Signed by Governor Baker on January 13, 2021

**Key aim:** To establish a special commission to examine and make recommendations to reduce racial inequities in maternal health:

- Barriers to accessing prenatal and postpartum care
- Delivery and quality of care
- Historical and current structural, institutional, and individual types of racism in communities of color
- The conditions that constitute severe maternal morbidity
- Availability, affordability, and adequacy of insurance coverage

*Thank you to everyone who called the governor's office to help get the bill passed!*



**In This Issue:**

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# MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATION

## Order S.2889 and Bill S.1335

### An Act Advancing the Health of Pregnant Persons

**Status:** Discharged to Committee on Senate Rules on August 13, 2020. No further action taken on January 5, 2021.

**Key aim:** To order that the committee on public health begin an investigation to advance the health of pregnant persons.

## SD.699

### An Act Effectuating Equity in COVID-19 Vaccination

**Status:** Declared emergency law February 4, 2021.

**Key aim:** To hire a new employee in the department of health and human services who will focus on overcoming disparities in COVID-19 vaccination. The employee will:

- Establish partnerships with community-based organizations, healthcare centers, and faith-based organizations.
- Deliver accurate and culturally-competent information about vaccine efficacy.

Policy subcommittee members:

Abena Asare / Lauren Cohen / Ebunoluwa Falade / Radhika Sharma

# NATIONAL LEGISLATION

## H.R. 4995 and H.R. 4996

### Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act and Helping Moms Act

**Status:** Passed the House and referred to Senate committees in September 2020.

**Key aims:** Improve obstetric care and outcomes by:

- Extending Medicaid coverage to a full year after childbirth.
- Improving access to maternity care in rural areas.
- Helping hospitals and providers implement clinical practices.
- Beginning to address racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes.

## S.Res.14

### A resolution designating January 23, 2021 as "Maternal Health Awareness Day"

**Status:** Agreed to by Senate on January 22, 2021 and referred to Committee on the Judiciary the same day.

**Key aim:** Designated January 23 as Maternal Health Awareness Day, recognizing the high number of pregnancy related deaths including the 60% of deaths that are preventable, and raising awareness among the general public and physicians to address and eradicate disparities.

## **H.R. 1897 and S.916 Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA's) Act**

**Status:** Referred to House Subcommittee on Health on September 22, 2020.

**Key aim:** To establish programs to prevent maternal mortality:

- Require CDC to provide assistance in data collection and reporting.
- Create regional centers to address implicit bias and cultural competency.

## **H.R. 1551 and S.1960 Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act**

**Status:** Referred to House Subcommittee on Health on March 7, 2019.

**Key aim:** To improve quality health outcomes and value of maternity care:

- Develop quality measures for maternal and infant health and standardized data collection and reporting.
- Provide funding for states to enhance data collection.

## **H.R. 79 Nationally Enhancing the Well-being of Babies through Outreach and Research Now (NEWBORN) Act**

**Status:** Referred to House Committee on Energy and Commerce on January 4, 2021.

**Key aim:** To authorize funding for creation and implementation of infant mortality pilot programs in metropolitan areas with high rates of infant mortality.

## The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021

**Status:** Unveiled and introduced by Congresswoman Lauren Underwood, Congresswoman Alma Adams, Senator Cory Booker, and members of the Black Maternal Health Caucus on February 8, 2021.

Builds on existing maternal health legislation and the Black Maternal Health Momnibus of 2020 with 12 bills to comprehensively address the drivers of the maternal health crisis.

**Key aims:** To make critical investments in addressing social determinants of health, funding community-based organizations, growing and diversifying the perinatal workforce, and improving data collection processes and quality measures. To address the impacts of COVID-19 and climate change on maternal and infant health.

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