

Rural MOMS Act

RURAL MATERNAL & OBSTETRIC MODERNIZATION OF SERVICES ACT

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According to the CDC, **rural areas have a maternal mortality rate that is 38% higher than urban areas.** With shortages of health care providers and a challenging payer mix, rural hospitals are more likely to close their labor and delivery units in order to make ends meet. In fact, **more than half of rural counties lack hospitals with labor and birthing services.** This contributes to a disparity in access to care and worse outcomes for the 18 million women and people of reproductive age who live in rural America.

Unfortunately, this disparity is even more prominent for minority populations, and worsening access to maternity care in rural America further exacerbates health disparities between white populations and communities of color.

This is unacceptable. **Nearly 60 percent of maternal mortality is preventable.** Hemorrhage, mental health conditions, and hypertension are some of the leading causes of maternal mortality, and they can all be prevented.

The legislation would take important first steps in understanding the root causes of maternal mortality and developing solutions to improve maternal care in rural America.

Specifically, the Rural MOMS Act would:

- **Improve Rural Maternal and Obstetric Care Data** by directing the CDC to coordinate efforts with respect to maternal mortality and morbidity, to report on women's health conditions according to sociocultural and geographic contexts, and to emphasize research on pregnancy-related deaths.
- **Reward New Rural Obstetric Network Grants** to establish regional innovation networks to improve maternal mortality and morbidity as well as birth outcomes.
- Expand Existing Federal Telehealth Grant Programs to include birth and postpartum services as part of telehealth networks and to allow federal funding to be used for ultrasound machines, fetal monitoring equipment, and other pregnancy-related technology.
- **Establish a New Rural Maternal and Obstetric Care Training Demonstration** to support training for family medicine physicians, obstetricians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, midwives, doulas, and other professionals to provide maternal care services in rural community-based settings.
- **Report on Maternal Care in Rural Areas** to identify the locations of gaps in maternity care, recommendations to standardize data collection on maternal mortality and morbidity, and activities to improve maternal care in rural areas.