

## HOW TO

# PREVENT MATERNAL MORTALITY INJUSTICES

## AROUND THE WORLD

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 295,000 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth in 2017. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of maternal deaths (94%) occur in developing countries. Many nonprofit, government, and health care organizations around the world have made maternal mortality a top priority in their efforts to improve global and national health and well-being.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE (MMR) ACROSS THE GLOBE

Between 2000 and 2017, the global MMR decreased by 38%. But many developing countries still have extremely high MMRs, and some countries with advanced economies (such as the U.S.) have seen their MMRs increase over the past few decades.

### STATISTICS OF GLOBAL MMRS

In 2017, 295,000 women died during and following pregnancy and childbirth.

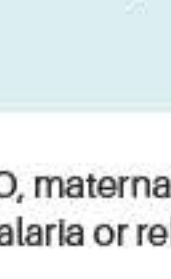
Adolescent girls under 15 years of age have the highest risk of maternal mortality.

Adolescent girls ages 10-19 have the highest risks of complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

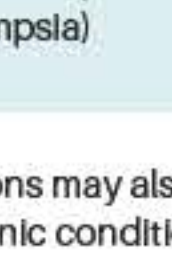
In nearly 75% of all maternal deaths, the major maternal complications are as follows:



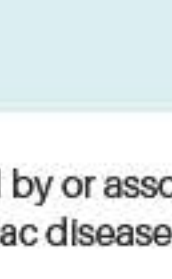
Severe bleeding (mostly bleeding after childbirth)



Infections (usually after childbirth)



High blood pressure during pregnancy (preeclampsia and eclampsia)



Complications from delivery



Unsafe abortion

According to WHO, maternal complications may also be "caused by or associated with infections such as malaria or related to chronic conditions like cardiac diseases or diabetes."

### STATISTICS OF MMRS IN THE U.S.

In the U.S., MMRs can be four times higher for women who do not receive prenatal care, compared with women who do.

For the past six decades, pregnancy-related deaths among American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic black women have been nearly four times more common than among white women.

42 deaths per 100,000 live births among black women



12 deaths per 100,000 live births among white women

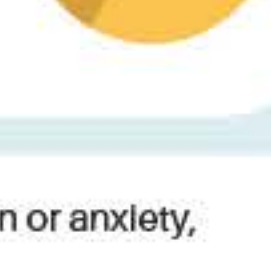
25% of women in the U.S. do not receive the recommended number of prenatal visits.



32% of African American women



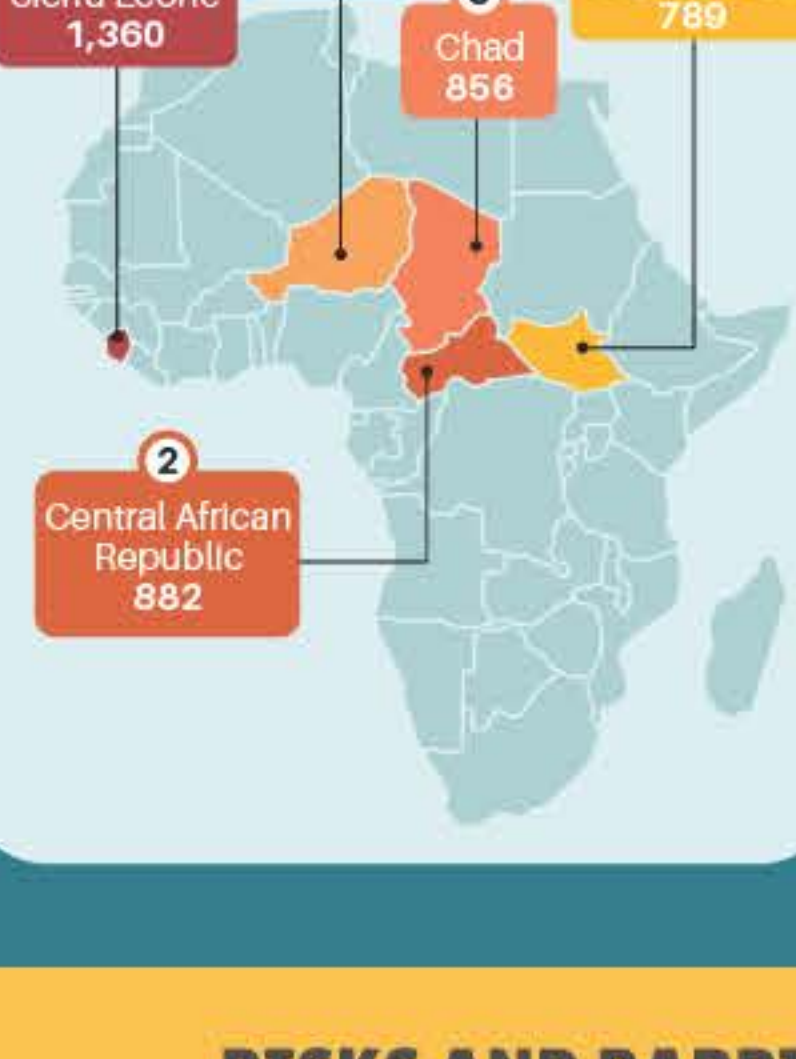
41% of American Indian or Alaska Native women



21% of pregnant women in the U.S. experience moderate to severe depression or anxiety, negatively impacting the mother, child, and family.

### MMRS IN FIVE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN 2015

Deaths per 100,000 live births:



### MMRS IN FIVE DEVELOPED/DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN 2015

Deaths per 100,000 live births:



## RISKS AND BARRIERS TO HEALTH CARE

During pregnancy and postpartum, women are at risk for certain medical conditions that may impact not only their health but also the health of their child.

### CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.

Leading causes of pregnancy-related deaths among pregnant women:

#### DURING PREGNANCY



- Cardiovascular and noncardiovascular health conditions
- Infections

#### DAY OF DELIVERY



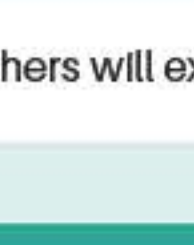
- Hemorrhage
- Amniotic fluid embolism
- Cardiovascular conditions

#### FIRST 6 DAYS POSTPARTUM



- Hemorrhage
- Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy
- Infection

#### 7-42 DAYS POSTPARTUM



- Infection
- Other cardiovascular conditions
- Cerebrovascular accident

#### 43-365 DAYS POSTPARTUM



- Cardiomyopathy
- Cardiovascular and noncardiovascular health conditions

### POSTPARTUM AND PERINATAL DEPRESSION IN THE U.S.

1 in 9 expectant mothers will experience symptoms of postpartum depression.

#### SYMPTOMS:

- Excessive crying
- Panic attacks
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Difficulty bonding with the baby



#### RISKS:

- Suicidal thoughts and suicide
- Preterm births
- Low birth weight

### SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR COMMON COMPLICATIONS

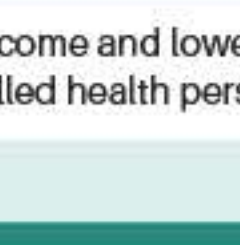
#### SEVERE BLEEDING:

Inject oxytocics immediately after childbirth to reduce the risk of bleeding.



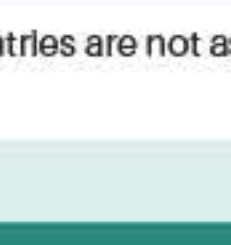
#### INFECTION:

Practice good hygiene and recognize and treat the early signs of infection.



#### PREECLAMPSIA:

Administer drugs such as magnesium sulfate.



Though simple solutions exist for pregnancy and childbirth complications, unfortunately health care professionals in many developing countries lack the resources and expertise to implement them.

The majority of births across several low-income and lower-middle-income countries are not assisted by skilled health personnel.

### BARRIERS TO QUALITY MATERNAL HEALTH CARE

#### GENERAL BARRIERS:

Poverty



Distance to facilities



Lack of information



Inadequate or poor quality services



Cultural beliefs and practices

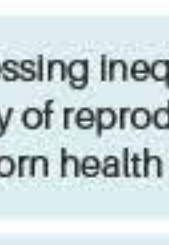


#### IN THE U.S.:

Closure of rural hospitals and obstetrics programs is leading to obstetrical deserts and poor health outcomes, which points to the need for highly qualified women's health nurse practitioners in these areas.

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE AND PREVENT MATERNAL MORTALITY

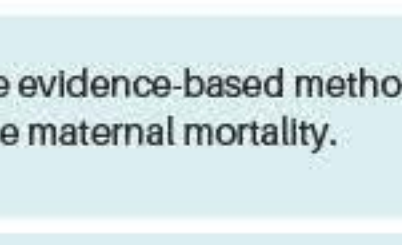
The WHO, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) have announced detailed strategies for reducing maternal mortality rates.



**World Health Organization**

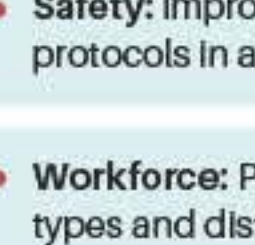
The WHO's "Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality Strategy" involves working with partners in supporting countries toward:

- Addressing inequalities in access to and quality of reproductive, maternal, and newborn health care services.
- Ensuring universal health coverage for comprehensive reproductive, maternal, and newborn health care.
- Addressing all causes of maternal mortality, reproductive and maternal morbidities, and related disabilities.
- Strengthening health systems to collect high quality data in order to respond to the needs and priorities of women and girls.
- Ensuring accountability in order to improve quality of care and equity.



The AAFP has outlined the following four primary objectives in decreasing MMRs:

- Evaluate evidence-based methods to decrease maternal mortality.
- Review methods to increase recognition of implicit bias and reduce disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality.
- Develop strategies to help improve resident education and support practicing family physicians providing full-scope reproductive and maternity care.
- Address the growing loss of rural maternity services nationwide.



The HRS Maternal Mortality Summit - Technical Report summarizes key findings on actions to decrease rates of maternal mortality and morbidity:

- Access:** Improve access to patient-centered, comprehensive care for women before, during, and after pregnancy, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- Safety:** Improve quality of maternity services through efforts such as the utilization of safety protocols in all birthing facilities.
- Workforce:** Provide continuity of care before, during, and after pregnancies by increasing the types and distribution of health care providers.
- Life Course Model:** Provide continuous team-based support and use a life course model of care for women before, during, and after pregnancies.
- Data:** Improve the quality and availability of national surveillance and survey data, research, and common terminology and definitions.
- Review Committees:** Improve quality and consistency of maternal mortality review committees through collaborations and technical assistance with U.S. states.
- Partnerships:** Engage in opportunities for productive collaborations with multiple summit participants.



## CONCLUSION:

As public health officials continue to collaborate with health care organizations, women's health nurse practitioners and other health care professionals will play a key role in implementing solutions for reducing MMRs in the U.S. and abroad.



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Sources: <https://www.mhrf.org/topics/mmatl-health-in-the-united-states/>; <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/maternal-mortality>; <https://www.aafp.org/news/2022/07/Women%27s-History-Month-Our-Commitment-to-Reduce-the-Maternal-Mortality-Rate-.html>; <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/16/53227570/Women-History-Month-Our-Commitment-to-Reduce-the-Maternal-Mortality-Rate-2017>; <https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/2019/05/15maternalmortality.html>; <https://www.cdc.gov/library/publications/the-worksheets/book/2222rank.html>; <https://www.womenshealthcare.com/preventing-postpartum-depression-closer-to-home/>; <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/health/maternal-mortality/Maternal-Mortality-Technical-Report.pdf>