

Maternal Health Building Blocks

Introduction

Research is critically needed to understand why the U.S. maternal and infant mortality rates remain comparatively high and to drive down these alarming statistics.

The Issue

Without accurate data, the full range of causes of these deaths remains unknown. Research is key to developing, testing and implementing evidence-based interventions.

Currently, only 75% of states and territories use the 2003 electronic birth record and only 65% have adopted the 2003 electronic death record. Only 37 states use the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) program and only 15–20 states have maternal mortality reviews. All states should utilize these valuable data collection systems.

Accurate data collection will better inform research priorities and clinical practice.

What Is Needed

Multiple, complementary strategies are needed to drive down the U.S. maternal mortality rate.

As a critical first step, all states should be given the resources to adopt the 2003 U.S. standard electronic birth and death records systems. Maternal mortality reviews are needed in all states to accurately and effectively analyze the data from birth and death records.

Alongside those efforts, PRAMS should expand to all states, the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program should be expanded so that more communities have the resources to review infant deaths, and the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) should be funded to include assessment of maternity care.

What Must Congress Do?

Congress can help improve maternal and infant health outcomes by improving the building blocks for research and knowledge by:

- Increasing funding for Safe Motherhood, PRAMS, and FIMR
- Funding a Maternity CAHPS
- Providing NVSS with \$4.2 million to implement the 2003 birth certificate and electronic birth records in states and territories
- Providing NVSS with \$20.8 million to implement the 2003 death certificate and electronic death records in states and territories
- Funding CDC to assist states in implementing maternal mortality reviews
- Funding Section 4302(a) of ACA to collect data on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language, and disability status in all federally conducted or supported health care or public health programs and activities
- Providing grants to states to implement state-wide Maternal Health Quality Collaboratives to identify areas for improvement

