



Nursing Groups Unite to Address the Black Maternal Health Crisis, Call for Real Action to Address Persistent Barriers and Challenges at the 2024 Black Maternal health Summit

Congressional Black Maternal Health Caucus Holds Annual Stakeholder Summit

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SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA), Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), and The National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH) applaud the Congressional Black Maternal Health Caucus for convening their annual Stakeholder Summit to discuss combatting the maternal health crisis. Our organizations are paramount to this discussion as we, and the nurses we represent, have the power to find solutions to these challenges. We are glad the caucus recognizes this by ensuring nurses are at the table for these critical conversations. Registered nurses (RNs) and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), such as certified nurse midwives (CNMs) and certified nurse practitioners (NPs), all play a key role in maternal health care and ensuring access to care for all women—recognizing the need to improve health outcomes for Black women in particular. [According to the CDC](#), Black women are roughly three times more likely to die from complications before, during, or after pregnancy than White women due to underlying health inequities.

ANA, AWHONN, ACNM, and NPWH know that the United States is facing an escalating health care crisis, with high maternal morbidity and mortality serving as the most alarming symptom of a broken system. This issue is not isolated but rather a critical indicator of the broader challenges within our health care system. Despite spending significantly more on health care, Americans experience poorer health outcomes and shorter lifespans compared to those in other developed nations. Further exacerbating the problem is the shortage of health care providers—particularly RNs, NPs with education and certification in women’s and maternal health, and CNMs—impacting patient access to care. Now, we are seeing the closure of maternity units and maternal health care practices, especially in rural areas, which only serves to worsen the situation.

We call on Congress to pass *The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act (H.R. 3305/S. 1606)*, or ‘*Momnibus*’ as a first step to addressing the crisis. The *Momnibus* is a compilation of several individual bills that would further maternal health by, for example, funding community-based organizations working to advance maternal health equity and investing in the growth of the number of maternity care providers offering culturally congruent care to mothers and babies. Of significance, this legislation also strives to support efforts to diversify the perinatal workforce—a vital part of addressing health inequities. **We are asking Congress to take action and pass the ‘*Momnibus*’! We know this legislation will save lives.**

Our organizations also call on Congress and the Administration to ensure that RNs—especially APRNs such as NPs and CNMs—can practice to the top of their education and clinical training so that patients have access to these trusted clinicians. CNM and NP practice continues to be unnecessarily restricted in many states due to outdated and unnecessary regulatory barriers. Patients must have access

to these providers through inclusion in public and private payer provider networks and receive equitable payment for the services they provide.

Moreover, the staffing shortages across the country will only worsen if substantive action is not taken. Insufficient nurse staffing jeopardizes patient access, safety and quality outcomes, and negatively affects nurse retention and the overall work environment. Appropriate staffing is a dynamic process that aligns the number of nurses, their workload, expertise, and resources with patient needs to achieve quality patient outcomes within a healthy work environment. **ANA, AWHONN, ACNM, and NPWH call on Congress and the Administration to work closely with nurses to identify and implement approaches that bolster the nursing workforce across the country.**

ANA, AWHONN, ACNM, and NPWH stand ready to work with Congress, the Administration, and other stakeholders to find real, common-sense solutions to the maternal health crisis. Our patients and families in need of care have no other choice—nurses know we must get this done.

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About the American Nurses Association

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 5 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all. For more information, visit www.nursingworld.org. To assist nurses in registering to vote and deliver key election season information, ANA has created NursesVote.org to keep nurses well informed.

About The American College of Nurse-Midwives

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents Certified Nurse-Midwives and Certified Midwives in the United States. ACNM's members are primary health care clinicians who provide evidence-based midwifery care for women and gender nonconforming people throughout the lifespan, with an emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, gynecologic, and reproductive health. Founded in 1955, ACNM works to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the midwifery profession and across the care continuum to ensure better healthcare outcomes for the people and communities midwives serve.

About The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit membership organization. Our mission is to empower and support nurses caring for women, newborns, and their families through research, education, and advocacy. Learn more about us at awhonn.org.

About The National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health

NPWH is the professional community giving voice to over 13,000 certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioners and other advanced practice registered nurses who provide women's and gender-related healthcare. We set a standard of excellence by generating, translating, and promoting the latest research and evidence-based clinical guidance, providing high quality continuing education, and advocating for patients, providers, and the WHNP profession. Our mission includes protecting and promoting women's and all individuals' rights to make their own choices regarding their health and well-being within the context of their lived experience and their personal, religious, cultural, and family beliefs.