

MATERNITY ACTION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The national maternal and infant health (MIH) landscape is troubling, and New Jersey ranked 47th in the nation for maternal deaths¹. Non-Hispanic Black persons and Hispanic persons in New Jersey are nearly 7 and 3 times more likely to die due to pregnancy than non-Hispanic White women, respectively². These deaths, many of which were preventable, underline the gaps to receiving quality care for mothers and young children in the state.

To bring attention to this issue, New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, in partnership with the State and community partners, created the Nurture NJ (NNJ) Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan has the following primary goals:

1. Ensure all women are healthy and have access to care before pregnancy
2. Build a safe, high-quality, equitable system of care and services for all women during prenatal, labor and delivery and postpartum care
3. Ensure supportive community environments and contexts during every other period of a woman's life so that the conditions and opportunities for health are always available³

To propel implementation of the NNJ Strategic Plan, the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute (Quality Institute) created a Maternity Action Plan (MAP). The MAP provides actionable steps, examples, and resources to stakeholders looking to act and drive change, including community members, regulators and policymakers, philanthropies, and health care providers and payers.

The MAP contains four areas for action:

1. **Build the Maternity Workforce Needed to Achieve Birth Equity**
 - Promote reforms to educate, recruit, and retain a more diverse MIH workforce, including ongoing anti-racism education and training
 - Use community input and data to enhance health care workforce training, recruitment,

and retention programs, and workforce sustainability to improve MIH

- Increase support for these key MIH workforce roles: community health workers, community doulas, lactation consultants and lactation support professionals, and midwives

2. **Collect and Use Data to Improve Equity and Quality**

- Improve data collection and reporting
- Use maternal health data in quality improvement, payment models, and public reporting to improve equity and quality

3. **Reform Payment Systems to Drive High Quality Holistic Maternal Infant Health Care**

- Support and sustain existing MIH programs and as needed, launch and leverage payment reforms and pilots to further MIH quality and equity
- Improve the Perinatal Risk Assessment (PRA) form and use it to connect pregnant individuals to social and clinical services
- Build upon and scale existing care models that focus on the continuum of integrated care across the full perinatal period

4. **Improve Community-Based Social Supports**

- Make a safe, secure place to live available to all New Jersey families
- Maximize financial support to families for high-quality childcare
- Enhance and build awareness of Connecting NJ to support Title V Block Grant and other community programs.

Each of the strategies featured in the MAP support recommendations within the NNJ Strategic Plan. The MAP points to existing programs and pilots in New Jersey and elsewhere to use as models for improving MIH and sustainably implementing the NNJ Strategic Plan.

¹ State of New Jersey. (2022). *Combating New Jersey's Maternal and Infant Mortality Crisis*. <https://nj.gov/governor/admin/fl/nurturenj.shtml>

² Nantwi, A., & Slutzky, C. (2022). *New Jersey Maternal Mortality Report 2016-2018*. <https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/maternalchild/mchepi/mortality-reviews/>

³ Hogan, V., Lee, E., Asare, L., Banks, B., Benitez-Delgado, L., Bingham, D., Brooks, P., Culhane, J., Lallo, M., Nieves, E., Rowley, D., Karimi-Taleghani, P., Whitaker, S., Williams, T., & Madden-Wilson, J. (2021). *The Nurture NJ Strategic Plan. The State of New Jersey*. <https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf>