

The Health Initiative That Could Save New Mothers' Lives

Josie Cooper

The Alliance for Patient Access (allianceforpatientaccess.org), founded in 2006, is a national network of physicians dedicated to ensuring patient access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. AfPA accomplishes this mission by recruiting, training and mobilizing policy-minded physicians to be effective advocates for patient access. AfPA is organized as a non-profit 501(c)(4) corporation and headed by an independent board of directors. Its physician leadership is supported by policy advocacy management and public affairs consultants. In 2012, AfPA established the Institute for Patient Access (IfPA), a related 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. In keeping with its mission to promote a better understanding of the benefits of the physician-patient relationship in the provision of quality healthcare, IfPA sponsors policy research and educational programming.



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Women in the United States are still [far more likely](#) to die from pregnancy-related causes than women in other developed countries. A [shortage of OB-GYN doctors](#) and [shuttered maternity units](#) in many states are partly to blame. (1-3)

The Department of Health and Human Services [has announced](#) a Postpartum Maternal Health Collaborative to combat high maternal mortality. (4)

Postpartum Maternal Health Collaborative

The project focuses on six states: Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota and New Mexico. Together, these states will put new research and policy solutions to work toward improving health outcomes for mothers and babies. State health experts, policymakers, community health providers, and data sci-

entists will collaborate to understand – and address – barriers to adequate maternal care.

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The six participating states will implement and study policies and practices that could better serve pregnant and postpartum women. That may include:

- Partnerships with doulas and culturally competent care providers
- Increased telehealth and mobile outreach
- Improved education

The Postpartum Maternal Health Collaborative forms part of the 2022 White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis. Other key elements include:

- Extending the postpartum coverage of [federal insurance](#) to 12 months following birth (5)
- \$90 million in taxpayer funds was awarded by the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) to increase maternal healthcare access in underserved communities. (6)

Maternal Health in the United States

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In 2021, 1,205 women died of complications from childbirth, often weeks after delivering, when access to care might be lower, but the need for postpartum care is still high. Nearly half of maternal deaths occurred after the mother had left the hospital.

[Disparities in access to care](#) put some women at higher risk, but most [maternal deaths are preventable](#).

References:

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7. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2024/03/13/1238269753/maternal-mortality-over-estimate-deaths-births-health-disparities#:~:text=The%20CDC's%20National%20Center%20for,NPR%20and%20other%20news%20outlets>.
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Disclosures: Josie Cooper is the Executive Director of the Alliance for Patient Access. This article was also published at healthpolicytoday.org.

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Corresponding Author



Josie Cooper
Executive Director
Institute for Patient Access
2020 K Street NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 951-7095
Email: jcooper@woodberryassociates.com