

Healthy Start Programs Receive \$105 Million to Reduce Maternal Mortality

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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To improve maternal outcomes, in April, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that more than 100 community-based [Healthy Start](#) programs around the country would share **\$105 million** in funding. (2)

More Than 80% of Maternal Deaths are Preventable:

Local recipients of this funding will enroll women, infants, and children up to 18 months old in programs tailored to improve health outcomes during pregnancy and early childhood. Such interventions have [produced positive reductions](#) in excess mortality. (3)

Programs will concentrate outreach in communities experiencing

comparatively high rates of maternal and infant deaths – at least 1.5 times the national average. Black and Indigenous women and those living in under-resourced and rural communities are [more likely](#) to experience these tragic outcomes (4) partly due to inadequate access to prenatal health care. More than 80% of [such maternal deaths are preventable](#). (5)

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CDC data has tracked a [decrease in the maternal mortality rate](#) in 2022 after unusual spikes during the COVID-19 pandemic. (6) Race and wealth disparities persist, however.

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Tailored Support Helps Moms’ Individual Needs

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Services also include universal screening for intimate partner violence, a devastating but preventable factor that impacts [both maternal and infant health](#) and occurs at higher rates in communities impacted by poverty. (7)

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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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