



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

CLARE E. CONNORS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2021

News Release 2021-33

Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors Joins Coalition of 22 Attorneys General Urging Congress to Pass the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021

HONOLULU – Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined a coalition of 22 attorneys general led by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul urging Congress to pass the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021. The legislation is aimed at combatting the high Black maternal mortality rate and increasing access to maternal and perinatal care.

The coalition is highlighting the need to advance health equity across the country for all racial and ethnic minorities – especially Black mothers. The coalition issued a letter today to Congressional leadership calling on Congress to pass H.R. 959, the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021. This legislative package addresses the social determinants of the Black maternal mortality crisis, including improving access to housing, transportation and nutrition services.

"The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 seeks to address this health crisis by providing federal assistance to community-based health programs and front-line workers," said Attorney General Connors. "I urge Congress to pass this important legislation to ensure that all members of our community are provided the best available maternal healthcare."

The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 is co-sponsored by Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14) and other members of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.

The Momnibus is intended to help decrease maternal mortality among Black mothers, who die at a rate three to four times higher than white mothers. Similarly, Native American, Asian-American and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic women are more likely to face maternal mortality than white women and non-Hispanic women. As the White House announced on April 13, "quality, equitable healthcare is a right, not a privilege."

However, many risk factors play into increased rates of maternal mortality, including preexisting conditions, socioeconomic status, lack of health insurance, and implicit bias and discrimination in health care.

The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 addresses maternal mortality by ensuring women have access to equitable care at all stages of pregnancy. The legislative package is comprised of 12 bills that address the crisis through a multifaceted approach of increased grant funding, enhanced data collection and improving community programs. By specifically addressing the social determinants of health, the package aims to reduce maternal mortality by providing funding to community-based maternal health organizations; diversifying the perinatal workforce; supporting mothers and improving maternal health care for individuals with mental health conditions, substance abuse disorders, and those who are incarcerated; enhancing postpartum care; and promoting maternal health innovation such as telehealth, maternal vaccinations, and payment options from pregnancy through the postpartum period.

If passed, the policy changes would benefit individual state programs by increasing funding, furthering access to community supports and enhancing education services for mothers. More broadly, the legislation would assist state attorneys general in working to protect residents against race-based discrimination within the health care system.

Joining Attorneys General Raoul and Connors in calling on Congress to pass the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 are the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

#

For more information, contact:

Gary H. Yamashiroya
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
(808) 586-1284
Email: ATG.PIO@hawaii.gov
Web: <http://aq.hawaii.gov>
Twitter: @ATGHgov