

Government Must Step Up to End Diaper Need in US Says New Study in January Issue of American Journal of Public Health

The capacity of diaper banks to meet diaper need varies widely across the nation, and is largely dependent upon the philanthropic support of local communities.

NEW HAVEN, CT, UNITED STATES, November 15, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With nearly half the infants and toddlers in the US living in poor and low-wage families—who may struggle to access material basic necessities—federal, state and municipal support is essential to augment nonprofit efforts to combat diaper need, according to a study in the [American Journal of Public Health](#).



Diaper need is every community's problem...the country's problem. As this study demonstrates, even the best efforts of the nonprofit sector cannot solve that problem without public sector involvement.”
Sanjeev Sriram, M.D., MPH

Diaper need is the struggle to provide an adequate supply of diapers to keep children clean, dry, and healthy. Previous research has associated diaper need with maternal depression; diaper rash and urinary tract infections; and decreased work hours for parents, because they are turned away by child cares that require them to

supply diapers.

The authors documented the impact of hundreds of nonprofits belonging to the [National Diaper Bank Network](#) (NDBN), which distributed more than 52 million diapers in 2016, and devoted more than a million volunteer hours to the effort. While the diaper distribution programs successfully helped nearly 280,000 children during the time period, collectively, the NDBN diaper distribution programs reached just 4% of the 7 million young children living in families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

“Given the harms that we know children and families face from diaper need, this points to a serious public health problem with long lasting impact,” said lead author Kelley E.C. Massengale, Ph.D., MPH.

Previous research conducted by Massengale has demonstrated significant benefits when children receive diapers, including positive changes in parental mental health; improved child health and happiness; increased opportunities to access child care, go to work, and attend school; and the ability to divert household finances toward other material basic needs, including utilities and medical care.

“Diapers have an enormous impact on families,” said Joanne S. Goldblum, CEO of the National Diaper Bank Network and one of the study's authors. Goldblum also co-authored a 2013 study in the journal *Pediatrics* that linked diaper need to maternal depression.

“We found that diaper need is a stronger predictor of depressive symptoms than food insecurity,” Goldblum said. “That’s not surprising. There are at least some public programs to help families with food, such as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). But in most of

the country, families with diaper need must rely upon the charity of nonprofits with limited resources.”

Sanjeev Sriram, M.D., MPH, said the American Journal of Public Health study is the latest research pointing out the need for public policy around diaper need. “Past research has shown providing diapers keeps kids healthier and helps parents attend school and work, which of course benefits the family and the community economically,” he said. “Diaper need is every community’s problem, every state’s problem, and the country’s problem. As this study demonstrates, even the best efforts of the nonprofit sector cannot solve that problem without public sector involvement.”

The authors propose a number of policy solutions to end diaper need, including: repeal of sales tax on diapers, the allocation of government resources to establish and expand diaper bank programs, and government assistance directly to families living in poverty.

The capacity of diaper banks to meet diaper need varies widely across the nation, and is largely dependent upon the philanthropic support of local communities. The study found that in more than 14 US states, less than 1% of the diaper need was met by nonprofits. States with the highest percentages of coverage included Rhode Island, Texas and Alabama at 16%, 15%, and 10%, respectively.

The authors cited past studies of diaper bank outcomes that showed significant benefits of providing families with diapers: “Having an adequate diaper supply can have a positive impact on early childhood education participation, parents’ work attendance, the ability to keep scheduled appointments, and opportunities to participate in community events outside the home.”

Anna E. Austin and Lynn H. Comer were also authors.

The National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN) is a nationwide nonprofit dedicated to eliminating diaper need in America, by leading a national movement to help meet the basic needs of all babies and their families, including access to clean, dry diapers and other material goods. Founded in 2011 with the support of Huggies®, the network raises national awareness of diaper need (#DiaperNeed) and supports the development and expansion of diaper banks in communities throughout the country. Its active membership includes more than 200 diaper banks, diaper pantries, and food banks located in 50 US states and the District of Columbia. More information on NDBN and diaper need is available at www.nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org, and on Twitter (@DiaperNetwork), Instagram (@DiaperNetwork) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NationalDiaperBankNetwork) (facebook.com/NationalDiaperBankNetwork).

Troy Moore
National Diaper Bank Network
+1 203-821-7348
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases. © 1995-2019 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.