

National Survey Reveals Maternal Health Care Failures Women of Color Hit Hardest

Survey of 3,857 new mothers is the most comprehensive in a decade

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES,
June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --
[Read the full report here](#)

Today, the National Partnership for Women & Families, in partnership with MomsRising and the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, released the fourth national [Listening to Mothers](#) survey, the most

comprehensive of its kind in a decade. Based on responses from 3,857 mothers of infants and toddlers across the country, the report places the experiences of pregnant people and new mothers at the center of the maternal health conversation and policy debate.

The survey uncovered troubling patterns affecting mothers across the country.

Far too many women reported not feeling heard, being treated disrespectfully and being ignored or neglected, with Black mothers, American Indian/Alaska Native mothers, and other women of color facing greater barriers and reporting worse outcomes in many areas.

Here are some of the toplines from the survey:

- **Lack of Respectful Care:** Too many mothers feel unheard. Over 40% of Listening to Mothers' respondents told us that providers failed to respond in a timely manner to requests for help, and 17% said they had been ignored or neglected.

"I did not feel heard or valued. I felt dismissed."

"A lot of things were done without my permission or without me even being informed."

- **Untreated Mental Health Conditions:** Mental health treatment is out of reach for many. The survey identified high rates of anxiety and depression before, during, and following pregnancy. Rates were highest among American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander



mothers and Black mothers. More than half of these women received no treatment - counseling or medication, for reasons including cost and a shortage of available maternal mental health providers.

"I was so depressed I was almost catatonic. I told my doctors and baby's doctor but received no help."

"I wish there were more support for me and the depression I felt early on after delivery. I felt like my feelings and concerns were ignored and felt very alone."

- Midwives and Doulas Remain Out of Reach: Women aren't getting high-quality care they want and need. Only 5% of women had a birth without at least one major medical intervention. Just over half of births were scheduled in advance, either a scheduled cesarean birth or by inducing labor. When care providers recommended an induction, the only reason given half of the time was that they were nearing their due date. Midwives who stood out as providing quality care were used by only a small percentage of respondents (8%), and the great majority had no doula support.

"Having a midwife was so amazing. I truly felt heard and supported from start to finish!"

"My doula was like a birth coach, a therapist, and a friend all rolled into one."

- Racial Inequity Persists. Women of color, those covered by Medicaid, young mothers, and women with disabilities reported facing greater barriers and worse outcomes and experiences across many measures.

"As an African-American woman, it is scary knowing the statistics on complications when delivering in hospitals."

"I feel like I was treated differently and frowned upon by some, even avoided by some nurses due to my preference to use a prayer rug and pray five times daily."

The findings come as harmful policy decisions are exacerbating maternal health disparities. Medicaid cuts are accelerating closures of hospitals and labor and delivery units, while restrictions on reproductive health care are interfering with emergency treatment and deepening workforce shortages.

"Women are struggling at every stage of their birthing journeys - facing disrespect, being denied care and having their concerns dismissed," said Jocelyn Frye, president of the National Partnership for Women & Families. "For Black women and other women of color, it's even worse. Because we believe the people closest to the problem are often closest to the solution, we spent three years surveying several thousand mothers - and we're fully committed to spending the years ahead fighting for the changes moms told us they want and need."

"We know what works – and we have a blueprint for implementation," said Dr. Nima Sheth, vice president for health justice at the National Partnership for Women & Families. "We have both the evidence and the expertise to drive the change needed at every level of our maternal health care system. What we need is the political will."

"At BMMA, we work to center the knowledge, lived experiences, and solutions of Black women and birthing people to meaningfully address and improve maternal health," said Danielle Rivers, research associate, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Inc. "The Listening to Mothers national survey is critical because it elevates the experiences of those closest to the maternal health crisis – pregnant women and birthing people. When we elevate the voices and experiences of the most marginalized, including Black women, everyone benefits."

"We cannot solve our country's shameful maternal health crisis without centering the voices and lived experiences of mothers, especially Black and Indigenous mothers who suffer the worst outcomes. Our country urgently needs the insights from the Listening to Mothers survey to more effectively address this public health emergency," said Tina Sherman, MomsRising National Director for Maternal Justice. "MomsRising is dedicated to bringing the real-world experiences of our nation's mothers straight to policymakers, and this data is critical to the fight to make pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period safe, respectful, and equitable for all."

[Click here](#) to view this on our website.

#

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care, and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at [NationalPartnership.org](https://nationalpartnership.org) (<https://nationalpartnership.org/>).

Llenda Jackson-Leslie
National Partnership for Women & Families
ljackson-leslie@nationalpartnership.org

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/918497548>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.