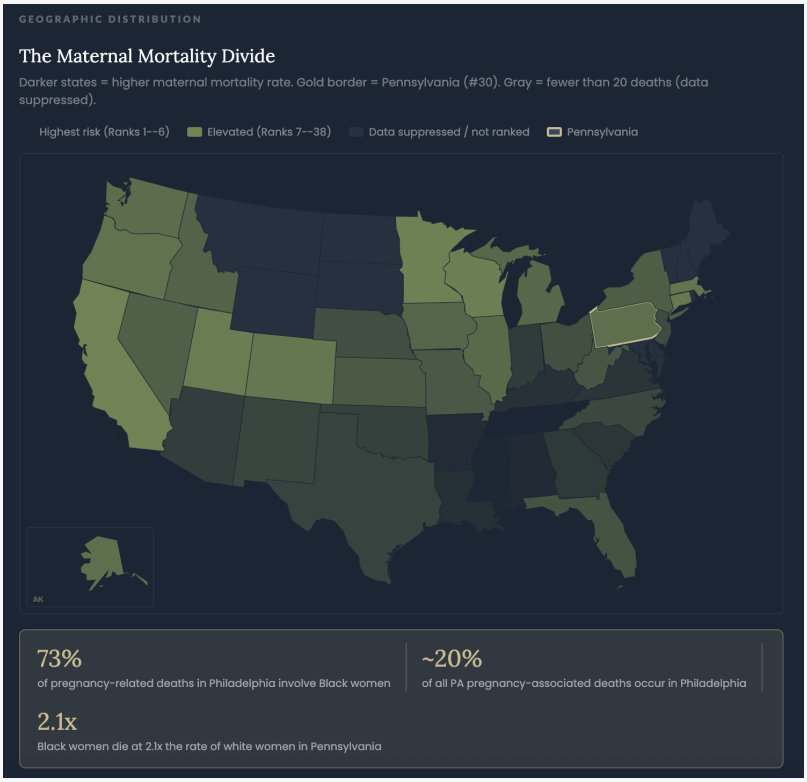
New Study Finds Nearly Fourfold Gap in Maternal Mortality Rates Across U.S. States

Tennessee recorded the highest maternal mortality rate among 39 states with published data, nearly four times California's rate.



A state-by-state look at maternal mortality rates across the United States and pregnancy-related mortality disparities in Pennsylvania.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new nationwide study published by Harden Crichton, P.C., describes significant maternal mortality rate variations across the United States. The study analyzes Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data for the 39 states with published maternal mortality rates between 2018 and 2022.

Tennessee had the highest rate among states with published data, recording 41.1 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. That rate was 77% above the national rate of 23.2 and represented 166 maternal deaths during the five-year period.

Mississippi ranked second at 39.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, followed by Alabama at 38.6, Arkansas at 38.3 and Louisiana at 37.3. California had the lowest published rate at 10.5, meaning Tennessee's rate was nearly four times California's rate during the same period.

Pennsylvania ranked 31st among the 39 states with published rates, recording 17.5 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 116 deaths from 2018 through 2022. Although the state's rate was below the national figure, a separate review by Pennsylvania's Maternal Mortality Review Committees found that 41 of the 42 pregnancy-related deaths occurring in 2021, or 98%, were preventable.

The CDC defines a maternal death as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of her pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its

management, but excluding accidental or incidental causes.

> These figures demonstrate that maternal mortality remains a serious concern even in states with rates below the national average."
> *Kevin Harden, Jr., co-founder of Harden Crichton, P.C.*

"These figures demonstrate that maternal mortality remains a serious concern even in states with rates below the national average," said Kevin Harden, Jr., a Philadelphia trial attorney and co-founder of Harden Crichton, P.C. "In Pennsylvania, reviewers classified 41 of 42 pregnancy-related deaths occurring in 2021 as preventable, underscoring the need to identify opportunities for improvement among healthcare providers, facilities and support systems."

The Pennsylvania committees define a preventable death as one that had at least some chance of being avoided through reasonable changes involving patient, family, provider, facility, system or community factors. A preventability determination is not the same as a legal finding of medical malpractice.
The study also highlights racial disparities in maternal health. In 2024, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women was 44.8 deaths per 100,000 live births, approximately 3.2 times the rate of 14.2 for non-Hispanic white women, according to the CDC.

The full study can be viewed on Harden Crichton, P.C.'s website here:
https://www.hardencrichton.com/blog/which-states-are-the-most-dangerous-to-give-birth-in/

About Harden Crichton, P.C.
Harden Crichton, P.C. is a Philadelphia personal injury law firm representing individuals and families in serious personal injury, medical malpractice, wrongful death, birth injury, civil rights and other complex matters. The firm has recovered more than $100 million for injured clients and handles cases on a contingency fee basis, meaning there are no upfront attorney's fees or legal costs unless compensation is secured.

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