



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, new and expecting mothers face challenges of varied complexity and require care and support at all levels; a significant concern is the increase in maternal mental health disorders that can occur before, during, and after pregnancy, and include mild to severe depression, and intense feelings of anxiety; and

Whereas, New York State is committed to providing access to resources that ensure positive maternal health outcomes, and supports the goals of Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week to raise awareness of mental health issues arising throughout the perinatal period – before and during pregnancy, and postpartum up to one year after birth – and to further reduce the stigma associated with these issues; and

Whereas, mental health conditions rank among the leading causes of maternal mortality in New York, with approximately one in five pregnancy-related deaths due to mental health conditions; it is estimated that one in eight women experience postpartum depression, with women of color significantly more likely to have symptoms; and

Whereas, New York State is making significant strides in improving maternal and infant health care outcomes by permitting up to 20 hours of leave for eligible employees to attend appointments, creating the first New York directory of *doulas* – birthing professionals who provide support before, during, and after childbirth – and expanding access to these services; and

Whereas, to help further provide compassionate care, support, and necessary resources to mothers and birthing parents who experience mental health distress, New York State will train counselors serving the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on issues related to maternal mental health, postpartum depression, and anxiety; and

Whereas, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)'s Project TEACH program strengthens and supports the ability of New York's Obstetric, Pediatric, and Primary Care Providers (PCPs) to deliver care to children and families who experience mental health concerns, and the State is supporting Project TEACH's initiative to train a wider range of front-line practitioners, including therapists, lactation consultants, WIC staff, home visiting nurses, and others so they can provide mental health support to pregnant and postpartum New Yorkers they assist; and

Whereas, New York State recently expanded HealthySteps, an evidence-based program administered by OMH, that pairs behavioral health professionals with pediatric teams to provide early childhood mental and physical health care in pediatric settings, to include 46 new sites statewide; and

Whereas, prompt and capable care provided before, during, and after childbirth can make a critical difference in maternal mental and physical health and outcomes, and New York State takes this opportunity to recognize the importance of mental health for all mothers, with a particular focus on women of color; we will continue building supports to help birthing people during the perinatal period, along with advancing public discourse on this critical issue that impacts many birthing parents, children, and families;

Now, Therefore, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim April 29 - May 5, 2024 as

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this thirtieth day of April in the year two thousand twenty-four.

Secretary to the Governor
Karen Persichilli Keogh

Governor