



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Lea Webb Hosts a Joint Public Hearing: An Examination of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Rates in New York State

LEA WEBB February 24, 2025

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC HEARING, MATERNAL MORTALITY, MATERNAL MORBIDITY**

(ALBANY, N.Y.) Today, Senator Webb hosted a Joint Public Hearing addressing the alarming disparities in maternal health outcomes and gathering input from a broad range of stakeholders. The hearing focused on the barriers to prenatal and postpartum care that contribute to high maternal mortality and morbidity rates, especially among women of color.

Joining Senator Webb in leading the hearing were:

- **Senator Gustavo Rivera**, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Health
- **Senator Roxanne J. Persaud**, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Services
- **Senator Samra Brouk**, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health

“As Chair of the Senate’s Women’s Issues Committee, I am committed to the health and well-being of all New Yorkers,” **said Senator Lea Webb**. “Every mother deserves the opportunity for a safe and healthy pregnancy, and it is our responsibility to identify the barriers and disparities that too many women face. Through open dialogue and thoughtful solutions, we will work toward a future where maternal health is prioritized for all, regardless of

background or circumstance.”

The rate of maternal mortality in the United States is approximately 23.5 deaths per 100,000 live births, the worst rate of any high-income country. In the United States, New York ranks 22nd for highest maternal mortality rate. From 2018-2020, the State Department of Health reported a maternal mortality rate of 19.3 per 100,000 live births. This rate also included a racial disparity larger than the national average. Black women were more than four times as likely to die while giving birth in comparison to white women in New York State, and more than 70 percent of these deaths are preventable.

Testimony at the hearing was taken from governmental administrators, health practitioners, advocacy groups, and individuals directly impacted by maternal mortality and morbidity. These testimonies provided a platform to document concerns and ideas regarding prenatal and postpartum care, with a focus on identifying actionable solutions to improve outcomes across New York State.

Witnesses presenting testimony at the hearing included:

NYS Department of Health

Johanne Morne- DOH Executive Deputy Commissioner

NYS Department of Health

Dr. Kirsten Siegenthaler-DOH Director, Division of Family Health Panel B

The Bronx Health Link

Anastasia Libovich-Practicing Midwife

New York Midwives

Helena Grant-President

Patricia O. Loft-Licensed Midwife

Odessa Fynn-NYC Representative

Pregnancy Justice

Ashley C. Sawyer-Senior Policy Counsel

NYC Commission for Gender Equity

Chanel L. Porchia-Albert CD, CLC, CHHC- Doula Panel C

Albert Einstein-Montefiore College of Medicine

Dr. Shani R. Scott-MD

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Dr. Ashanda Saint Jean

United Health Services Hospitals, Inc

Erin Raskin, MSN, RN-Nurse Manager of Maternity and Newborn Nursery

Krystal Thompson, MD-Obstetrics & Gynecology, Women's Health

New York State Psychiatric Association

Frank Dowling, MD-Member, Committee on Legislation; Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook

New York State Nurses Association

Janna Walter-RN Panel D

The Birthing Place

Myla Flores-Founder

HealthConnect One

Dr. Twylla Dillion-President & CEO

NYS Child and Family Wellbeing Fund Workgroup

Angela Olivia Burton-Steering Committee Member

1199 SEIU

Tori Newman-Legislative Coordinator

National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First

Katelyn Galbraith-Government Affairs Manager

National Institute for Reproductive Health

Hunter Stewart-Program and Partnerships Manager

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