



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Senator Brouk Announces Major Maternal Mental Health Legislation Signed Into Law During Minority Mental Health Month

SAMRA G. BROUK July 20, 2022

| ISSUE: **MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH, MATERNAL HEALTH, MATERNAL DEPRESSION, MENTAL HEALTH, MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

ROCHESTER, NY - Today, Senator Samra Brouk announced that legislation she authored to improve maternal mental health screenings was signed into law. This follows the successful implementation of New York's 9-8-8 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Lifeline and is a part of the Senator's ongoing work to transform mental health care in our communities.

"Maternal mental health conditions are the number one most common complication for birthing people, affecting one in five gestational parents," **said Senator Samra Brouk**. "Black mothers are twice as likely to experience one of these conditions, yet only half as likely to receive help. We know that existing tools are not always efficacious for Black mothers and people of color; this bill will study these disparate impacts and allow us to address the gaps that exist in providing equal care for all birthing people. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this bill, along with others that put the health and well being of mothers and their babies first—accessible, equitable health care that's available whenever needed is the foundation of building healthy families."

Senate Bill [7753](#) requires the New York State Office of Mental Health and the Department of Health to conduct a study on the inadequacies of existing postpartum depression screening

tools in an effort to address the under-diagnosis and treatment of women in vulnerable, at-risk populations, particularly Black women.

This study will:

- Examine what additional questions or tools could be implemented to minimize disparities found within the current screening protocols.
- Identify racial disparities within existing protocols and screening measures for postpartum depression and mood disorders
- Identify ways to reduce or eliminate transgender and non-binary and racial and ethnic health care discrimination and disparities that contribute to disparities within current postpartum depression screening protocols.

The current depression screening test is the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). Experts have stated, and community leaders have told us, that this test was designed with higher and middle-income white women in mind. As such, screenings often do not take social determinants of health into account—food scarcity, systemic racism, housing insecurity and more—and are less effective at detecting maternal depression in Black and brown women, as well as in nonbinary and transmasculine gestational parents.

Postpartum depression can have significant negative consequences, not only for those affected but for their children and families. **Maternal mental health conditions** such as anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar illness and substance use disorders, can create bonding issues between a birthing parent and her baby, contribute to sleep and feeding problems, and cause mental, emotional, developmental and verbal **complications in children**.

In asking professionals to reevaluate current postpartum depression screenings and factor in modern medical understandings and social determinants of health, we will facilitate the creation of new screening tools able to better diagnose and treat the tens of thousands of mothers and families affected by postpartum depression and other maternal mental health conditions annually, noted Senator Brouk.

Senator Brouk's work to improve maternal health outcomes in our community is ongoing. She will convene a maternal health panel discussion on Wednesday August 10th, from 5–7:30 PM at the Gantt Recreation Center on 700 North Street.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S7753

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires the office of mental health and the department of health to conduct a study on the disparate impacts regarding postpartum depression screening tests

January 10, 2022

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Samra G. Brouk**

Do you support this bill?