



SUPPORT THE BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH MOMNIBUS ACT

NWA RECOMMENDS:

Congress should pass the Momnibus Act in full to address the urgent and entrenched racial disparities in maternal health outcomes.

TACKLING SYSTEMIC DISPARITIES

Despite record healthcare spending and increased coverage of maternity care through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the United States continues to have significantly higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity than other high-income nations. Entrenched racial disparities are a substantial factor in this trend, with Black and Indigenous women at higher risk of pregnancy-related death than white women.

In spring 2020, the Black Maternal Health Caucus introduced the first-ever comprehensive effort to tackle maternal health disparities with a twelve-bill package to target different facets contributing to inequitable treatment of Black mothers in the healthcare system and beyond. The Black Maternal Health Momnibus has been championed by Congresswomen Lauren Underwood (D-IL) and Alma Adams (D-NC), as well as now-Vice President Kamala Harris and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ).

The National WIC Association has been a strong supporter of the Momnibus since its inception. With its comprehensive vision, the Momnibus tackles racial disparities for both Black and Indigenous women, expands on the role that community health supports like WIC can play in building healthier outcomes, and sets the path for a nation that prioritizes healthier outcomes for all mothers.



WIC PROVISIONS IN THE MOMNIBUS

One of the initial bills included in the Momnibus is the *Social Determinants for Moms Act*, which tackles factors that impact community health and pregnancy outcomes. In this bill, the Momnibus recommends extending WIC eligibility for postpartum women to two years, ensuring consistent access to nutritious foods throughout the postpartum and inter-pregnancy periods. This bill mirrors bipartisan legislation in the Wise Investment in our Children Act (WIC Act).

Expanding WIC's postpartum period has gained even more importance as more than half of all States have expanded Medicaid coverage to one year postpartum. For the first time ever, Medicaid coverage now outpaces WIC's postpartum support (for non-breastfeeding participants). These two programs work in tandem to screen for risk factors and address the health and nutrition needs of new mothers.

In the *Honoring Kira Johnson Act* and the *Perinatal Workforce Act*, the Momnibus works to build cultural competency and diversify workforces impacting pregnancy outcomes. The Momnibus is inclusive of community health workers, building education pipelines to grow and diversify the nutrition, dietetics, and lactation support professions. The Momnibus would invest in implicit bias and anti-racism trainings for WIC providers, in addition to healthcare professionals, to ensure that the current WIC workforce is equipped to proactively tackle these entrenched disparities.

In 2021, the Momnibus included the *Tech to Save Moms Act*, which included new funding to build health information exchange platforms across maternity care providers, including WIC agencies. As the Momnibus seeks to advance a range of solutions that improve health outcomes for Black and Indigenous women, WIC is a critical piece of the puzzle and NWA is committed to advancing these solutions.