



SB 626 (Sen. Smallwood-Cuevas) – *Maternal Health Screenings and Treatments*

SUMMARY

SB 626 would require perinatal providers to follow ACOG guidelines mandate treatment coverage and ensure long-term accountability to improve perinatal mental health across California.

BACKGROUND

Maternal or Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) disorders, including postpartum depression, anxiety, and psychosis, are the most common complications of pregnancy and a leading cause of maternal mortality. Yet 75% of those affected by perinatal mental health concerns do not receive treatment despite the proven benefits of early intervention. These conditions affect approximately 1 in 5 birthing parents, with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities disproportionately impacted. Untreated PMH disorders contribute to \$2.4 billion in healthcare costs annually in California and lead to long-term negative health consequences, including a heightened risk of suicide, SIDS, and multigenerational impacts on the parent and child's long-term physical, emotional, and developmental health.

PROBLEM

Despite their prevalence, PMH disorders remain under-addressed within the healthcare system. Current laws lack sufficient resources and accountability to ensure timely, effective care. Untreated PMH disorders can lead to long-term consequences, including chronic mental health conditions, impaired parent-child bonding, adverse childhood experiences, and behavioral and developmental delays in children. They also contribute to higher rates of infant mortality and adverse birth outcomes such as low birth weight and Preterm birth.

SOLUTION

To support the perinatal mental health of California's birthing people and ensure healthy outcomes for infants, SB 626 seeks to:

- Require mandatory screening and treatment of perinatal mental health conditions by providers in accordance with ACOG guidelines
- Mandate that insurance providers and health plans cover essential mental health services
- Ensure accountability of insurers and health plans via reporting screening rates to regulatory agencies and the public.



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SUPPORT

- Black Women for Wellness Action Project (Co-Sponsor)
- CA Coalition for Perinatal Mental Health & Justice (Co-Sponsor)
- Maternal Mental Health NOW (Co-Sponsor)
- Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health (Co-Sponsor)
- PSI-California (Co-Sponsor)

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