

ACCESS TO MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES IN TENNESSEE

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Develop certification and state regulation requirements that allow for expanded scope of practice and reimbursement for advanced practice providers (e.g., family physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse midwives, certified midwives) and non-traditional providers (e.g., doulas, community health workers).⁴
- ▶ Support programs that increase access to birthing centers, rural-specific obstetrics-focused residency programs, and interprofessional education for high-quality obstetric care.
- ▶ Support access to Medicaid. Medicaid plays an important role in maternal and child health for mothers and babies in rural areas.⁴ In non-expansion states, rural residents are twice as likely to be uninsured⁸ which can result in delayed prenatal and maternity care.
- ▶ Incentivize the integration of rural EMS programs, community health workers, other non-traditional providers specializing in maternal care (e.g. doulas), and hospitals to support maternity care in maternal health professional shortage areas.⁷
- ▶ Provide malpractice insurance supplements to rural providers, inclusive of family practice physicians.⁷
- ▶ Support programs that improve access to mental health providers for outpatient and in-patient treatment of substance use and mental health disorders, including funding for community health workers and doula services.
- ▶ Support comprehensive health education in the K-12 school setting, along with evidence based programs aimed at teenage pregnancy prevention such as service learning and Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP).

References:

¹ Tennessee Department of Health, Division of PHA; based on interpolated data from the U.S. Census, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. Accessed February 2023.

² March of dimes maternity care deserts dashboard. Deloitte United States. (n.d.). Accessed February 2023. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/life-sciences-and-health-care/articles/march-of-dimes-maternity-care-deserts-dashboard.html>

³ Hung P, Kozhimannil KB, Casey MM, Henning Smith C. State variability in access to hospital-based obstetric services in rural U.S. counties. Policy Brief. University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center. 2017;1-6. <https://rhrc.umn.edu/publication/state-variability-in-access-to-hospital-based-obstetric-services-in-rural-u-s-counties/>

⁴ L. Corcoran; C. Clary; S. Brinkman; Rural Obstetric Unit Closures and Maternal and Infant Health; February 2021 National Rural Health Association; https://www.ruralhealth.us/NRHA/media/Emerge_NRHA/Advocacy/Policy%20documents/NRHA-Policy-Brief-Rural-Obstetric-Unit-Closures-and-Maternal-and-Infant-Health.pdf. Accessed February 2023

⁵ Kozhimannil KB, Interrante JD, Admon, LK, Henning-Smith C. Rural-urban differences in severe maternal morbidity and mortality in the US, 2007-15. Health Affairs. 2019;38(12),2077-2085.

⁶ DONA International. Find A Doula. Accessed February 2023. https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula/find-a-doula/?fwp_doula_location=35.5174913%2C-86.5804473%2C100%2CTennessee%252C%2520USA

⁷ Tennessee Department of Health: Family Health and Wellness. Maternal mortality in Tennessee 2017-2020... (n.d). Accessed February 2023. <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/MMR-2022-Annual-Report.pdf>

⁸ Foutz J, Artiga S, Garfield R. The role of Medicaid in rural America. Issue Brief. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. 2017:1-12. Retrieved from: <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-role-of-medicaid-in-rural-america/>

⁹ Tennessee Department of Health: Uninsured Adult Healthcare Safety Net Annual Report. Accessed February 2023. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/program-areas/reports_and_publications/SN-Report-FY21.pdf.

Note: This brief is modeled after the National Rural Health Association's Rural Obstetric Unit Closures and Maternal and Infant Health Policy Brief.⁴