

# THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Together advancing policies and implementing public health initiatives

[smfmadvocates.org](http://smfmadvocates.org)

## A Health Policy and Advocacy Update - *December 2025*

Thank you for your participation in the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine's **State Liaison Network** (SLN). Our quarterly newsletter brings you the latest advocacy, policy, and public health updates, happenings, and actions from the Society.

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## CONNECT WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

In response to member requests to have an easy and quick way to connect with other MFM advocates in their states, SMFM has launched the **State Liaison Network WhatsApp Community**, which includes separate chats for each state. We hope this will be a space for information sharing, collaboration, and support as you and your colleagues advocate in your institutions, your states, and at the federal level.

To ensure the community remains useful for members, we've created a list of dos and don'ts, which you can find linked [here](#).

**To join the WhatsApp Community and self-select into your state group chat, click below.** Please direct any questions to Samantha Berg, Manager of Advocacy at [sberg@smfm.org](mailto:sberg@smfm.org).

[Join the WhatsApp Community](#)

Having trouble finding your state group chat? Find the direct link [here](#).

Please note that this community is only open to SLN members. If you were forwarded this newsletter, please sign up for the SLN before joining the WhatsApp Community.

## REGISTER FOR THE CDC/SMFM MATERNAL MORTALITY PREVENTION MEETING



Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

CDC

You're Invited to the

**CDC/SMFM Maternal Mortality Prevention Meeting**

Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM PT

Hosted at the Pregnancy Meeting™ at  
Caesars Forum in Las Vegas, NV\*  
3911 South Koval Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89109 United States

Register at  
**[tinyurl.com/mmp26](https://tinyurl.com/mmp26)**

\*Registration for the Pregnancy Meeting™ is NOT required.

We are pleased to invite you to the 2026 [CDC/SMFM Maternal Mortality Prevention Meeting!](#)\*

Hosted on **Tuesday, February 10** as an ancillary event during the [2026 Pregnancy Meeting™](#), this event will be a collaborative space for national clinical partners to discuss progress and identify opportunities to prevent maternal mortality.

[Register Here](#)

Over the course of the four hours (8:00 AM - 12:00PM PT), attendees will learn about SMFM projects related to maternal mortality, hear updates on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs and the latest pregnancy-related data, learn from partners who are turning data into action to improve maternal health outcomes, and network with colleagues from neighboring states and communities. Attendees will walk away with resources, knowledge, and connections to support their efforts to prevent maternal mortality and promote the overall well-being of pregnant and postpartum people. [You can view a detailed draft agenda here.](#)

We hope to see you there!

*\*Separate registration for this event is required.*

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Questions? Please reach out to Samantha Berg, Advocacy Manager ([sberg@smfm.org](mailto:sberg@smfm.org)).

## ADVOCACY EVENTS AT THE PREGNANCY MEETING™

### **State Liaison Network-ing Event: Abortion Messaging Debrief and Q&A – Monday, February 9, 2026 from 5:30PM – 7:30PM PT**

SMFM invites you to a meeting of the SLN, the Society's member-driven initiative focused on advocacy and implementation of public health programs. Join SMFM Advocacy staff and members from the Reproductive Health Committee (RHC) to learn more about the abortion care messaging guidance developed for SMFM in 2024.

### **Special Topic Forum: Research Advocacy in Maternal-Fetal Medicine: Advancing Obstetric Research – Tuesday, February 10, 2026, from 1PM – 2:30PM PT**

This session brings together obstetric researchers and those that rely on their work to network, collaborate, and deepen their understanding of research advocacy. Participants will gain insights into recent federal legislative and regulatory developments, explore strategies to effectively advocate for obstetric research, and engage in a listening session to share challenges.

## NEW: OPINION WRITING TOOLKIT

Publishing opinion pieces is an excellent way to influence public opinion, combat misinformation, and sway policymakers. SMFM has developed a new toolkit to help SMFM members draft and submit opinion pieces. The toolkit can be found [here](#) (you will need to log-in to your SMFM account to access). If you have further questions or would like assistance, please contact Grace Pedersen, Advocacy Coordinator ([gpedersen@smfm.org](mailto:gpedersen@smfm.org)).



## WEBINARS ON POLICY UPDATES



On December 4, SMFM hosted **Advocacy Wrapped: 2025 in Review & What's Ahead**, a webinar recapping the impactful advocacy work SMFM and its members accomplished in 2025. Participants learned about the latest developments in Washington, DC, and their potential effects on their practice and patients.

[Watch the Recording Here](#)

Additionally, SMFM will host our next **Washington, DC Update** on **Thursday, March 19, at 2:00PM ET**. We'll break down our advocacy efforts, current legislative priorities, and regulatory changes that could impact your practice and patients. Join us to stay informed and prepare for what's ahead in perinatal care.

[Register Today](#)

## TAKE ACTION

### Support Federal Maternal Health Programs

In September, the CDC released [data collected from 46 states' MMRCs in 2021](#); this data showed that 87% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, and more than half of deaths (57%) occurred after delivery, up to one year postpartum.

Federal investments power programs that work together to improve maternal health outcomes nationwide. These programs save lives, lower long-term costs, and strengthen families, communities, and local economies.

**SMFM urges you to contact your Senators and Representative today and ask them to support families in their district by championing federal maternal health programs.**

[Write Your Legislators](#)



- **November 3, 2025:** SMFM joined 126 partner organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congress to fund the Title V MCH Services Block Grant and Special Projects of Regional and National Significance programs.
- **October 30, 2025:** SMFM joined 120 partner organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congressional leaders to reject proposed cuts to the CDC.
- **October 27, 2025:** SMFM joined more than 450 partner organizations in sending a [letter](#) to Congressional leaders urging them to provide no less than \$47.2 billion for the NIH, in addition to funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health.

## STATE HAPPENINGS

Most state legislatures are out of session for 2025. You can check if your state is still in session [here](#).

### Perinatal health advancements

In October, California enacted [SB.669](#), which will create a 10-year pilot program allowing up to five critical access hospitals to establish standby perinatal services. The goal of the program is to improve access to maternal and infant healthcare in underserved areas.



### Celebrating abortion care wins

The New York state legislature delivered a new shield law, [S.4914B](#), to the Governor's office earlier this month. If signed, the new law would protect individuals who provide or receive reproductive and gender affirming care that is lawful in New York from out-of-state legal actions and penalties.

### Monitoring abortion care bans and restrictions

As of October 1, 2025, **20** states have abortion bans up to 18 weeks gestation: **Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.**

**13** of these states (**Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia**) have total bans.

For up-to-date information on state abortion policies, see resources from [Abortion Finder](#), [Guttmacher Institute](#) and the [New York Times](#). You can also track pending state legislation alongside SMFM staff on our [Advocacy Hub](#).

## PARTNER RESOURCES

### American Society for Reproductive Medicine – Evaluating the Trump Administration's Initiative on IVF

On October 16, 2025, the Trump Administration announced a two-part initiative on in-vitro fertilization (IVF), focused on reducing the cost of select IVF drugs and clarifying options for employers to offer standalone fertility benefits to employees, like existing methods of offering dental and vision coverage. This [paper](#) highlights a number of things, including ASRM guidance for equitable access to fertility and reproductive healthcare.

## Center for Reproductive Rights - Reproductive Health and Data Privacy After Roe: Threats and Opportunities for State Action

Health and data privacy are increasingly under threat, leaving people vulnerable to the misuse of their personal information amid the broader landscape of reproductive health and pregnancy criminalization. We now have fewer medical privacy protections than we did at the beginning of 2025. In this [brief](#), the Center for Reproductive Rights explains why it is essential that states expand privacy protections to safeguard reproductive health care access and fight back against the weaponization of sensitive health information.

## Human Rights Watch and If/When/How – Whose Abortion Is It? The Harms of State-Mandated Parental Notification for Abortion and Judicial Bypass in the United States

This [report](#) from Human Rights Watch and If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice documents how state-mandated parental notification laws in six US states threaten young people's health and safety and undermine their human rights.

## March of Dimes – Report Card

The [2025 March of Dimes Report Card](#) highlights the many factors contributing to maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. Since 2008, March of Dimes has released this report to educate and advocate for better mom and baby outcomes across the US, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. For the fourth consecutive year, the United States earned a D+ grade for preterm birth, marking the longest stretch of the lowest grade in Report Card history. According to the report, behind this static letter grade lies a troubling truth: our nation remains stuck in a maternal and infant health crisis. In 2024, nearly 380,000 babies were born preterm—1 in 10 births—placing the US among the highest rates in developed nations. Progress is not reaching the families who need it most.

## Society of Family Planning – Science Unpacked

This [series](#) unpacks the science behind studies, theories, or narratives that have achieved prominence in public discourse, underscoring the expertise, humility, and rigor required for research to meet the threshold of sound science. Concurrently, this effort aims to elevate the importance of legitimate scientific exchange, demonstrate fidelity to evidence, and promote public trust in the scientific process.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

[“A ‘Floor’ on Abortion Is Still a Limit,”](#) *The New York Times*

[“Actually, Gen Z men do care about abortion,”](#) *The 19th News*

[“From Opt-Out to Opt-In: A Dangerous Shift for Abortion Training,”](#) *MedPage Today*

[“Investigating White Americans’ Mental Images of Who Has Abortions and Its Impact on Attitudes Toward Abortion Policies,”](#) *Communications Psychology*

[“Obstetric-Related Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act Violations and No Health Exception Bans,”](#) *JAMA Health Forum*

[“Racial Disparities in C-Sections Persist Despite Overall Decrease,”](#) *MedPage Today*

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Please share any feedback or items for future newsletters directly with Samantha Berg,  
SMFM's State Advocacy Manager ([sberg@smfm.org](mailto:sberg@smfm.org))

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