

THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Together advancing policies and implementing public health initiatives

smfmadvocates.org

A Health Policy and Advocacy Update - March 2026

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.

- [Connect With Your Colleagues](#)
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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 and public health leaders 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, Senior Manager of Advocacy at 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.

LATEST FEDERAL POLICY UPDATES - WEBINAR RECORDING



On March 19, SMFM hosted our latest **Washington, DC Update**, where participants learned how the latest federal policy updates could impact their practice and patients.

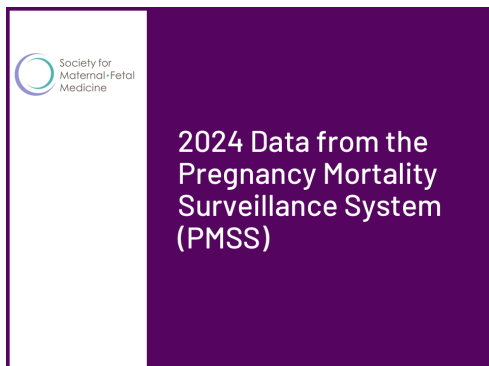
[Watch the Recording Here](#)

Our next **Washington, DC Update** will be on **Tuesday, May 26, at 2:00PM ET.**

[Register Today](#)

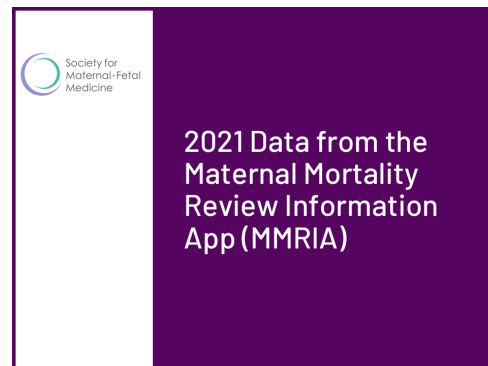
NEW RESOURCE - SLIDE DECKS ON THE LATEST PREGNANCY-RELATED MORTALITY DATA

At the 2026 Pregnancy Meeting™, SMFM hosted the **CDC/SMFM Maternal Mortality Prevention Meeting**, where attendees discussed the latest data from the **Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System (PMSS)** and the **Maternal Mortality Review Information App (MMRIA)**. We've now made these data slides available in branded and unbranded formats, complete with slide notes, to help you share the data and advocate for solutions to reduce pregnancy-related deaths and advance health equity. You can download our slides below, or access them on our [PMSS](#) and [MMRC](#) pages on the Advocacy Hub.



[SMFM-branded 2024 PMSS data slides](#)

[Unbranded 2024 PMSS data slides](#)



[SMFM-branded 2021 MMRIA data slides](#)

[Unbranded 2021 MMRIA data slides](#)

Questions? Please reach out to Samantha Berg, Senior Manager of Advocacy (sberg@smfm.org).

NEW RESOURCE - TOOLKIT FOR IRB ADVOCACY

Expanding Clinical Research during Pregnancy & Lactation: Advocacy Toolkit

This new toolkit equips obstetric care clinicians to advocate within their institutions for greater inclusion of pregnant and lactating people in clinical research. Those that achieve

the toolkit's three goals will become an Obstetric Research Champion.

Access the Toolkit

Questions? Please reach out to Becky Abbott, Senior Director of Advocacy (rabbott@smfm.org).

NEW ADVOCACY DOCUMENTS

Two new documents from SMFM's Health Policy and Advocacy Committee were recently published in ***PREGNANCY***, SMFM's Open Access journal. Access them below. For all documents related to policy and advocacy, go to SMFM's [Advocacy Hub](#).

- [Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Special Statement: Assessing and using maternal mortality data](#)
- [Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Special Statement: Opportunities to improve access to maternal-fetal medicine care in rural and underserved communities](#)



TAKE ACTION

Help Ensure Affordable, Quality Pregnancy Care

The financial cost of pregnancy care in the United States has become incredibly expensive, with some patients paying thousands out-of-pocket. These costs, varying by location and delivery type, add to the challenges new parents face during this major life change.

The [Supporting Healthy Moms and Babies Act \(S. 1834/H.R. 3762\)](#) would require private insurers to cover essential maternal health services, including prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care, without patient cost-sharing.

SMFM urges you to contact your Senators and Representative today to ask them to support families in their district by cosponsoring the Supporting Healthy Moms and Babies Act.

Write Your Legislators

Support Federal Maternal Health Programs

Too many pregnant and postpartum people experience preventable complications, affecting entire families, workplaces, and communities. The latest [data collected from 46 states'](#) MMRCs show that, in 2021, 87% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, and over half of deaths (57%) occurred after delivery, up to one year postpartum.

Federal investments power programs that work together to improve maternal 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

Submit a Request for Advocacy Support

Get more involved in advocacy by [tracking policies alongside SMFM staff](#) and using our [request support form](#) to get assistance from SMFM advocacy staff.

SMFM ACTIONS AND UPDATES



SMFM continues to advocate for you and your patients on federal and state levels. You can see all of our advocacy efforts by visiting the [Advocacy Activities and Updates](#) and [Press Room](#) pages of our Advocacy Hub.

Since our last newsletter, we have met with federal officials; filed legal briefs; and penned or joined letters, statements, and press releases, including:

- **March 16, 2026:** SMFM joined the National Rural Health Association in a [letter](#) of support for the Rural Residency Planning and Development Act of 2025, which authorizes funding to cover start-up costs, accreditation, faculty development, and recruitment, aiming to increase the number of trained physicians in rural areas.
- **March 9, 2026:** SMFM joined more than 500 organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congressional leaders to appropriate at least \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2027.
- **March 4, 2026:** SMFM joined 65 partner organizations in sending a [letter](#) to Senate leadership expressing strong opposition to any efforts to weaken the nation's main chemical safety law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which protects public health by reducing exposure to harmful chemicals and ensuring chemical safety testing.
- **February 25, 2026:** SMFM joined more than 200 partner organizations in a [statement of support](#) for the American Academy of Pediatrics' 2026 immunization schedule.
- **February 13, 2026:** SMFM led a [partner letter](#) to Nevada Senate and House Committees on Health and Human Services leadership urging them to establish a statewide perinatal quality collaborative.
- **February 12, 2026:** SMFM submitted a [letter](#) to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs leadership supporting Senate Joint Resolution 103, which would disapprove the recent United States Department of Veterans Affairs' rule related to Reproductive Health Services that effectively bans access to abortion care for veterans and their loved ones.
- **February 9, 2026:** SMFM submitted a [comment letter](#) to CDC outlining our support for continued data collection under the Maternal Mortality Review Information App (MMRIA).
- **February 9, 2026:** SMFM joined more than 400 partner organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congress to incorporate guidance protecting communities from immigration enforcement in "sensitive locations" like schools, child care facilities, health care, and public health facilities into DHS funding legislation.

- **February 9, 2026:** SMFM joined ACOG and other partner organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congress to conduct robust oversight of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) family detention facilities to ensure that those detained have timely, adequate access to medical care.
- **January 20, 2026:** SMFM submitted a [comment letter](#) to CDC outlining our support for continued data collection under the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). We also signed onto a [comment letter](#) with the Massachusetts Mind the Gap Coalition.
- **January 9, 2026:** SMFM joined 230 partner organizations in a [letter](#) requesting Congress conduct oversight regarding the abrupt changes to the U.S. childhood vaccine schedule made by HHS.
- **January 7, 2026:** SMFM signed onto an [amicus brief](#) to a Utah district court supporting abortion access in *Planned Parenthood Association of Utah v. State of Utah*.

STATE HAPPENINGS

About half of state legislatures are currently in session. You can check if your state is still in session [here](#).

Perinatal health advancements

In January, outgoing **New Jersey** Governor Phil Murphy approved [S.4894](#) to make the state's Department of Health the primary authority for immunization recommendations, striking language that previously relied on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).



In early March, **Virginia's** Senate and House passed legislation ([SB.133/HB.652](#)) to establish a work group to evaluate and improve the Commonwealth's response to parental prenatal and postnatal substance use. The enrolled bill was sent to Governor Abigail Spanberger on March 14, with a deadline of April 13. Additionally, the Senate and House passed [HB.425](#) to expand Medicaid coverage for remote patient monitoring through pregnancy and postpartum for high-risk pregnant patients and patients with advanced maternal age. The bill has not yet been sent to the Governor.

Over in **Wisconsin**, Governor Mark Gordon signed [SB.23](#) in March, which extends postpartum Medicaid to 12 months. [Arkansas is now the only state](#) that has not passed legislation extending postpartum Medicaid beyond 6 weeks.

Abortion care updates

Several states have passed legislation impacting abortion care in the first quarter of 2026. There have also been updates to state-level litigation:

- **Arizona:** In early February, an Arizona state court [permanently blocked](#) several laws restricting abortion care.
- **Indiana:** In early March, a judge [partially blocked](#) Indiana's ban on abortion care on religious grounds. Specifically, the Marion County Superior Court ruled that Indiana cannot enforce its abortion ban against the plaintiffs and all Hoosiers whose religious beliefs allow them to obtain abortion care that is otherwise prohibited by the law. Attorney General Todd Rokita already appealed the decision.
- **New Mexico:** On March 6, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham enacted a new law ([SB.30](#)) repealing reporting requirements for abortion care.
- **South Dakota:** On Friday March 20, South Dakota Governor signed three anti-abortion bills into law – [HB.1274](#), [HB.1257](#), and [HB.1313](#). Respectively, these bills

make it a felony to dispense or advertise medication abortion and related items; “clarify” how the state defines an abortion, notably excluding miscarriage and treatment for ectopic pregnancies; and require public schools to show students a “high-definition ultrasound video that shows the presence of the brain, heart, and other major organs as they appear at various stages of prenatal development,” as well as ultrasound or animated videos showing development from fertilization through birth.

- **Virginia:** On February 6, Governor Abigail Spanberger signed legislation ([SB.449/HB.781](#)) to add a constitutional amendment protecting access to abortion care to the November 2026 ballot. The amendment does include language allowing the state to restrict care after “fetal viability.”
- **Washington:** The Washington State Senate and House approved [SB.6182](#) to establish an Abortion Savings Program. The bill was delivered to Governor Bob Ferguson on March 13. Separately, on March 14, Governor Ferguson signed [SB.5917](#) to expand access to medication abortion.
- **Wyoming:** On March 9, Governor Mark Gordon signed [HB.126](#), which bans abortion when a “detectable fetal heartbeat” is present. This comes two months after the [state Supreme Court struck down](#) previous laws banning abortion care.

Monitoring abortion care bans

As of March 24, 2026, **21** 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, West Virginia,** and **Wyoming.**

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

Black Mamas Matter Alliance – Black Maternal Health Week

Held annually on April 11-17, [Black Maternal Health Week \(BMHW\)](#) is a week-long campaign founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance to build awareness, activism, and community-building to amplify the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of Black Mamas and birthing people.

The week is intentionally held during National Minority Health Month and begins on April 11th annually to join dozens of global organizations in marking this day as International Day for Maternal Health and Rights – an opportunity to advocate for the elimination of maternal mortality, globally.

The activities and conversations hosted throughout the week intentionally center the values and practices of the birth and reproductive justice movements.

WHAT WE'RE READING

["American Science, Shattered," StatNews](#)

["A Pregnant Woman at Risk of Heart Failure Couldn't Get Urgent Treatment. She Died Waiting for an Abortion." ProPublica](#)

["Abortion bans reshaped reproductive health, and now the rental market," 19th News](#)

["Birth Control Skepticism, Teen Fertility Education Center Stage at Trump's Women's Health Summit," KFF Health News](#)

["Contraception services dropped after 'defunding' provision hit clinics," News From The States](#)

["Fewer new moms are dying in Colorado – naloxone might be one reason why," Colorado Newsline](#)

["F.D.A. Decisions on Abortion Pill Were Based on Science, New Analysis Finds," New York Times](#)

["Medical Groups Sue to Block Childhood Vaccine Recommendations," New York Times](#)

["Pregnant in ICE Detention: Handcuffs and Pleas for Medical Care," New York Times](#)

["Restricting Access to Medication Abortion Will Not Help Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence," Health Affairs](#)

["They Didn't Want to Have C-Sections. A Judge Would Decide How They Gave Birth," ProPublica](#)

["US health department investigation 13 states that require insurance plans to cover abortion," The Guardian](#)

["US moving pregnant immigrant girls to Texas to avoid providing abortions, critics say," The Guardian](#)

["Weaponizing Water: How the Campaign Against Medication Abortion Co-opts Environmental Policy," Guttmacher Institute](#)

["Women With High-Risk Pregnancies Have Limited Options Under Abortion Bans," ProPublica](#)

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Please share any feedback or items for future newsletters directly with Samantha Berg, SMFM's Senior Manager of Advocacy (sberg@smfm.org)

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