

Reps. Sargent and Taylor: Women's health community supports Governor Evers' "Healthy Women, Healthy Babies" initiatives

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Democratic Legislators and Advocates applaud plan

MADISON – Today, Democratic members of the Wisconsin State Assembly joined with women's health advocates in support of Governor Evers' budget initiatives to create better birth outcomes and access to healthcare for women in Wisconsin. The Governor's proposal includes significant investments in improving women's health, reducing infant mortality rates, and working to eliminate racial disparities in Wisconsin. Currently, Wisconsin's infant mortality rate for African American babies is the highest in the nation, and the rate of infant deaths for black babies is nearly three times as high as the rate for white babies. The legislators and advocates speaking today applauded the Governor for recognizing this crisis and taking necessary action. Below is a selection of quotes from the broad coalition of legislators and advocates in support of these initiatives:

"It is truly refreshing to have a Governor who recognizes the importance of investments in and improving women's health and birth outcomes here in Wisconsin. Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right, and no mother should have to lose a newborn child due to inadequate care. We must take seriously the disparities that are present in Wisconsin

when it comes to women and infant health, and take meaningful steps to address them - Governor Evers has laid out a plan to do just that. The Governor's 'Healthy Women, Healthy Babies' initiatives expands health services for women and infants, takes steps to ensure that all women have the essential care that they deserve, and works to address the egregious racial disparities in our state." -Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison).

"Governor Evers' budget includes a \$28 million investment to support healthier pregnancies and births. It is crucial that those from the communities with the knowledge and expertise continue to lead this discussion. WAWH looks forward to working with Governor Evers' office and community leaders to keep these investments prioritized in the budget." - Sara Finger, Founder and Executive Director of Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health.

"Finally, we have a Governor who isn't playing politics with women's and children's health. Governor Evers understands that the health of our state depends on healthy women and healthy children. We have a long way to go to remedy health inequities for women and children of color, but Governor Evers wants to make the investments needed to not just address these disparities, but to enhance the health and lives of all women and children." - Representative Chris Taylor (D-Madison).

"Investing in doulas is a long term investment in healthier parents, healthier babies and healthier communities. The evidence is clear. And what we also know is that it takes a Village to raise a healthy child. This is why it is imperative to have collective, and bipartisan support in order to invest in the health of our children and families." - Micaela F. Berry, Doula and Director of Administration for Harambee Village Doulas LLC.

"Eliminating the stagnant and persistent health and birth disparities in our state, including our 'highest in the nation' Black infant mortality rate, is one of the most urgent and neglected issues we face in Wisconsin. Governor Evers' Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies proposal offers a powerful and promising set of initiatives that, if rightfully supported by our legislature, will set a new course for health equity in our state and prove that Wisconsin values the lives of all of its citizens." - Lisa Peyton-Caire, Founder and President of the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness