

# WAWH: Birth Equity Act key to disrupting persistent disparities

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*State Legislators Can No Longer Ignore the Health and Lives of Women & Babies of Color*

MADISON -- For over three decades, Wisconsin has been recognized as one of, if not the, worst states in the nation when it comes to maternal and child health disparities. To date, the Wisconsin State Legislature has failed to make this crisis a statewide priority. But with today's introduction of the groundbreaking [Wisconsin Birth Equity Act](#), elected leaders in our State's Capitol now have the opportunity to take up, advance, and pass a key set of evidence-based policies to declare that the lives of moms and babies of color matter.

"Thanks to the transformative leadership of Representative Shelia Stubbs and Senator LaTonya Johnson, we now have a powerful legislative bill package that enables our state to dismantle our most onerous barriers to maternal and child health," notes Health Equity Director for the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health Katrina Morrison.

Included in the Wisconsin Birth Equity Act are six bills that will:

- Provide an at-home wellness visit, upon request, within the first seven days of delivery
- Mandate insurance coverage of maternal mental health risk screenings
- Repeal Wisconsin's Medicaid birth cost recovery law
- Establish pregnancy as a qualifying event for employer-sponsored health plans
- Remove the sales tax on breastfeeding equipment and supplies
- Expand access to dental care for pregnant BadgerCare recipients

The development of Wisconsin Birth Equity Act was informed by those on the front lines of our state's pervasive maternal and child health disparities.

For Wisconsin to achieve equity in mothering and birthing, we must meaningfully address our inequities in maternal and child health and work toward dismantling the societal causes that underlie them. As budget proposals such as the *Healthy Women, Healthy Babies* initiative have been stripped from the State Budget in two consecutive sessions by the majority party, the Wisconsin Birth Equity Act and its innovative policy solutions are needed now more than ever.

"There is no shortage of positive policies available to achieve birth equity in Wisconsin," add Morrison. "The Wisconsin Birth Equity Act is not only a needed start, but a significant first step toward instituting actionable policy and system changes for moms and babies of color in our state."