



Spencer J. Cox

Governor

Declaration

Whereas, maternal mental health, which includes postpartum depression and pregnancy-related anxiety, continues to be a serious public health issue in Utah;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety encompass a range of symptoms and mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and, in extreme cases, psychosis;

Whereas, from 2018-2020, almost half (44.8%) of Utah mothers report mental health symptoms before, during, or after pregnancy, and one in four (28.8%) mothers had anxiety during pregnancy, and one in seven mothers (14.7%) reported symptoms of postpartum depression;

Whereas, Utah women of color disproportionately experience higher rates of postpartum depression: 35.5% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 27.9% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 21.9% of Black/African American, 15% of Hispanic/Latino, compared to 14.3% of White non-Hispanic mothers;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety are the leading complications of childbirth, with incidence rates higher than preterm births, low birth weight babies, and gestational diabetes;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety can affect a woman's ability to care for herself and to engage in healthy parenting behaviors;

Whereas, if parents get help and treatment for maternal depression and anxiety, it can have positive impacts on their lives including increased parent-child bonding; family stability; increased rates of breastfeeding; improved physical, behavioral, and developmental health and growth of children; and safer home environments;

Whereas, only half of women ask for help and only 6% sustain treatment for mental health issues during pregnancy and postpartum;

Whereas, there are evidence-based, cost-effective screening, detection, and treatment options to lessen the suffering of mothers, but which may not easily available to all mothers in Utah;

Whereas, the Utah Maternal Mental Health Referral Network is a resource for parents to find providers and support groups across the state and across all insurance and specialty types;

Whereas, screening, detection, support groups, therapy, and other treatments work for treating maternal mental health issues in pregnancy and postpartum;

Whereas, speaking about maternal mental health reduces stigma and encourages help-seeking from mothers and parents suffering alone;

Now, Therefore, I, Spencer J. Cox, governor of the state of Utah, do hereby declare May 2022 as

Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month in Utah

Spencer J. Cox
Governor