

MEDICAL SOCIETY
of the
STATE OF NEW YORK

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Division of Governmental Affairs
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

In Senate Rules Committee

S. 8907 (HANNON)

In Assembly Codes Committee

A. 10346-A (JOYNER)

An act to amend the public health law, in relation to maternal mortality review boards and the maternal mortality and morbidity advisory council

This legislation establishes the Maternal Mortality Review Board for the purposes of reviewing maternal mortality and morbidity. The Board shall assess the cause of death and factors leading, to death and preventability for each maternal death reviewed, and to develop strategies for reducing the risk of maternal mortality. **The Medical Society of the State of New York supports this measure.**

New York currently ranks 30th out of 50 states in its maternal death rate compounded by significant racial and ethnic disparities for women. Black women are nearly four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth compared to white women. Severe maternal morbidity, serious life-threatening complications of delivery, is more pervasive in women of color. According to the New York State Department of Health, in 2012-13, 67% of maternal deaths were among women who were insured through the Medicaid program. In addition, NYS DOH indicates that life-threatening complications of delivery are also highest among women living in high poverty neighborhoods and women with an underlying chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease, have a threefold likelihood of having severe maternal morbidity as women with no chronic conditions.

The creation of a maternal mortality review board will assist the state in the development and creation of new strategies for the prevention of maternal mortality and morbidity. The review board, under this legislation, would allow multidisciplinary experts to conduct a review process to access the causes of maternal death, factors leading to death, preventability and opportunities for intervention. It also would require the board to report aggregate findings and recommendations in order to share best practices on the prevention of maternal deaths.

The legislation also embraces national best practices on maternal health and ensures accountability and sustainability of a maternal review board. It also ensures that the board is diverse, multi-disciplinary and includes experts who serve and are representative of the diversity of women in medically underserved areas of the state. The legislation also provides confidentiality protections regarding the board's proceeding and requires the board to report on its aggregate findings and recommendations.

Maternal mortality is an important public health issue that must be addressed and it is critical for the NYS Legislature to act by creating this board in statute. **The Medical Society of the State of New York supports this measure and urges that this measure be passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Division of Governmental Affairs

Pfc/support
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