



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 24-1079, Version: 1**

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **RECOGNIZING JANUARY 23<sup>rd</sup> AS MATERNAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY IN COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, New Jersey became the first state to recognize January 23<sup>rd</sup> as Maternal Health Awareness Day through the work of the New Jersey Section of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG), Tara Hansen Foundation, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, and other vital organizations that work to help spread awareness and stop maternal mortality; and

**WHEREAS**, the theme for this year's Maternal Health Awareness Day is "Access in Crisis" as maternal care access is becoming more and more challenging, with more than one-third of U.S. counties considered maternity care deserts, according to a 2022 March of Dimes report; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 2.2 million women aged 15-44 live in counties considered maternity care deserts, with no access to obstetric care, birth centers, ob-gyns or certified perinatal practitioners; and

**WHEREAS**, many people, including those in the postpartum period, are losing Medicaid coverage following the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and the 12 months immediately after delivery can be critical because that is when some of the deadliest pregnancy-related complications occur; and

**WHEREAS**, Health and Human Services officials and stakeholders reported that the Covid-19 pandemic worsened factors contributing to maternal health disparities, like access to care, cardiovascular problems and other underlying conditions, which contributed to a 78% overall increase in maternal mortality rates in the U.S. between 2000-2020. The maternal death rate for Black or African American (not Hispanic or Latina) women was 44.0 per 100,000 live births in 2019, then increased to 55.3 in 2020, and 68.9 in 2021. In contrast, White (not Hispanic or Latina) women had death rates of 17.9, 19.1, and 26.1, respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, these results are unacceptable and occur regardless of income or education levels. A person's race should never determine their health outcomes, and pregnancy and childbirth should be safe for all; and

**WHEREAS**, as the wealthiest nation in the world, the U.S. should also be the safest place in the world to be pregnant and give birth; however, we are consistently among the least safe, with rates of maternal mortality and serious injury continuing to grow at an alarming rate; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, the U.S. had one of the worst rates of maternal mortality in the country's history going back to 1965. 1,205 people died of maternal causes in the U.S. in 2021, which represents a 40% increase from the previous year, and the U.S. rate for 2021 was 32.9 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, which is more than ten times the estimated rates of some other developed countries, including Australia, Austria, Israel, Japan and Spain which all reported between 2 and 3 deaths per 100,000 in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the CDC, cardiovascular conditions such as pulmonary embolisms, uncontrolled bleeding and problems emanating from hypertension are the leading cause of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. and most, up to 91% are preventable and more than half of such deaths occur 60 days after someone give birth; and

**WHEREAS**, each year, more than 50,000 individuals in the United States suffer from a "near miss" or severe maternal

morbidity, which includes potentially life-threatening complications that arise from labor and childbirth; and

**WHEREAS**, it is vitally important for us to improve maternal morbidity and mortality rates and the health disparities that contribute to adverse pregnancy outcomes, and raising awareness about this crisis is important to make maternal health the national priority it should be; and

**WHEREAS**, community-based maternal health care models, including midwifery childbirth services, doula support services, community and perinatal health worker services, and group prenatal care, in collaboration with culturally competent physician care, show great promise in improving maternal health outcomes and reducing disparities in maternal health outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, advocacy and community-based organizations, and others have used January 23rd as a day to raise awareness about maternal health, educate health care providers about maternal mortality, and encourage birthing people, families, and providers to recognize and discuss potential signs of an emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, this Honorable Body wishes to promote and raise awareness of Maternal Health Awareness Day in Cook County by raising public awareness about maternal mortality, maternal morbidity, and disparities in maternal health outcomes;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the more than 5.2 million residents of Cook County, do hereby take this opportunity to acknowledge National Maternal Health Awareness Day; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that in conjunction with National Maternal Health Awareness Day, that January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 be hereby declared Maternal Health Awareness Day in the County of Cook; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body.