



Rising Together: Creating Pathways to Birth Equity

a presentation by

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**BOLD
FUTURES**

NM COLLEGE
OF NURSING



Birthworkers

Midwives * Doulas * Physicians * Community Health
Workers * Nurses * Advanced Practice Nurse Clinicians *
Home-visiting Programs * Traditional Healers * Lactation
Consultants * Behavioral Health Providers * Nutritionists *
Physical Therapists * Community Activists * Herbalists *
Massage Therapists * and Others

WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MATERNITY CARE ACCESS IN NEW MEXICO ✓

**33.3% of
counties**

are defined as
maternity care
deserts compared to
32.6% in the U.S.

**17.9% of
women**

had no birthing
hospital within 30
minutes compared to
9.7% in the U.S.

**23.3% of
birthing
people**

received inadequate
prenatal care,
greater than the U.S.
rate of 14.8%.

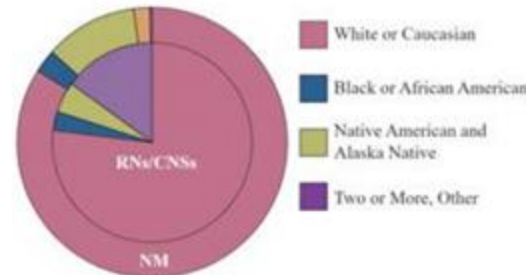
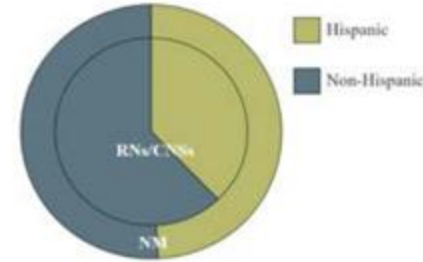
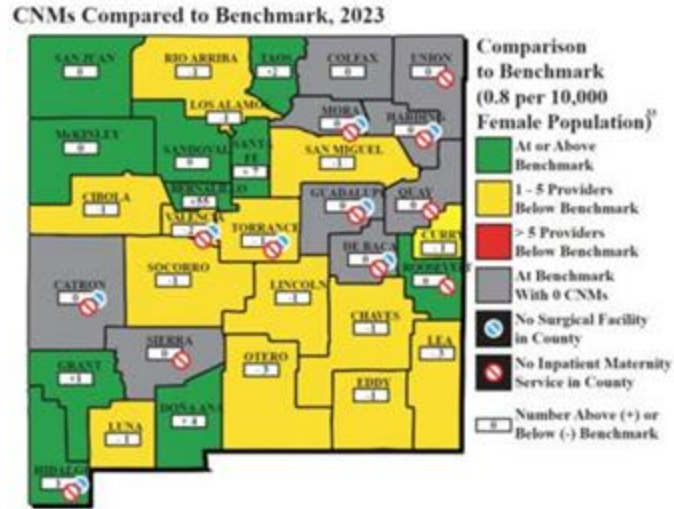
Women with chronic
health conditions
have a
43%

increased likelihood
of preterm birth
compared to women
with none.



<https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/new-mexico/maternity-care-deserts>

We Need More Birthworkers in NM



A total of 351 OB-GYNs held New Mexico licenses during 2021. Of these individuals, 93 were identified as out of state, 39 were excluded from analysis as nonpracticing and 219 were in active practice in New Mexico (Figure 5.7).

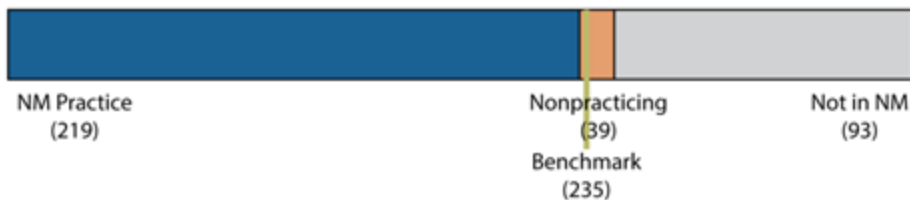


Figure 5.7. New Mexico's OB-GYN licenses by estimated status of out of state (gray), nonpracticing (orange), or practicing in the state (blue). The benchmark value for the state as a whole is shown by the green line.

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=nmh_c_workforce

According to AMCB, in the US, 87 (0.6%) CNM/CMs are AI/AN ~10 (7%) of CNMs in New Mexico are AI/AN

New Mexico Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Report (2025)

<https://www.nmhealth.org/publication/view/report/9227/>

Leading Causes and Circumstances Surrounding Pregnancy-Related Mortality

1st- mental health conditions (38.6%)

2nd- cardiac conditions (18.2%)

3rd- hemorrhage (13.6%)

Substance use disorder was involved in 54.5% of
PR deaths.

Mental health was a factor in 50.0% of PR deaths.

Disparities in Mortality by Demographic Factors in New Mexico

Indigenous (AI/AN) people

- * ~1 ½ times higher PAMR than non-Hispanic white
- * twice the rate of Hispanic people
- * Native women die at nearly twice the rate of which they give birth

People aged 35 and over

- * twice the PAMR of all other age groups

Unmarried people

- * ~ three times the PAMR of those who are married
- * percentage of deaths was 1 ½ times greater than the number of births

Medicaid recipients

- *3.5 times that of people with private or other insurance

CDC tools to define and report racism for MMR reports (2022)

Purpose of the Tools

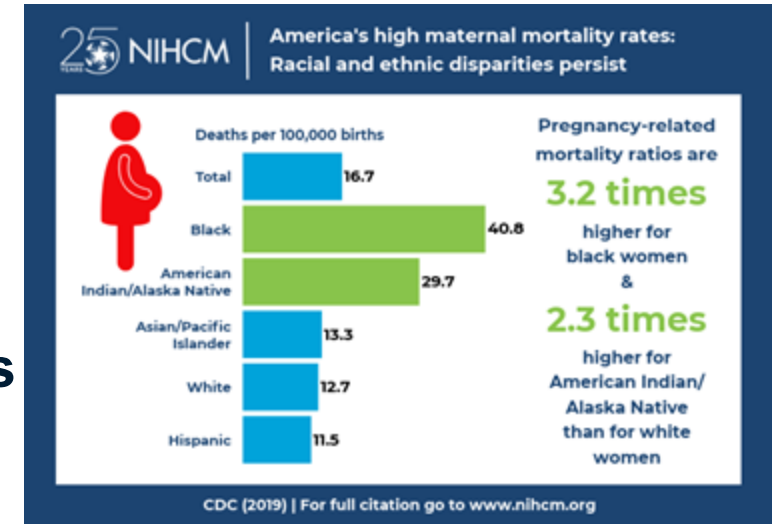
- Systematic Tracking
- Standardization
- Actionable Recommendations

Key Components of the Tools

- Definitions
- MMRIA Form Integration
- Working Group Findings

Why These Tools Are Important

- Acknowledging the Legacy of Racism
- Addressing Health Inequities
- Preventing Preventable Deaths



NM MMRC Priorities

Repeated from the 2022 report:

1. Extend Medicaid eligibility
2. Increase perinatal mental services
3. Increase substance use disorder treatment programs
4. Increase Care Coordination, Continuity of Care, and Access to Care
5. Ongoing perinatal quality improvement activities
6. Increase resources and support for intimate partner violence
7. Raise awareness of motor vehicle crashes in pregnancy-associated deaths

NM MMRC Priorities

(continued)

New in the 2025 report:

1. Consistent and thorough screening for substance use disorders, mental health indicators, stressors, and trauma
2. Harm reduction strategies
3. Increase access to the full range of perinatal service providers, such as doulas, midwives, birthing centers, peer counselors, and mental health providers
4. Require anti-bias training that includes cultural sensitivity, reproductive justice, social justice, and health equity
5. **NMDOH should prioritize a plan to address inequities of AI/AN maternal mortality in New Mexico**

Reproductive Justice is

“the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”

— **SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective**

Birth Justice requires a commitment to

- promoting birth equity +
- undoing the social systems, practices, beliefs, policies and leadership that are the root causes of inequities
- prioritizing positive outcomes for the most vulnerable
- culturally concordant and culturally relevant options
- solutions led by those most impacted by inequities

Recent NM policy changes that affect maternity care:

- Doula Credentialing and Access Act (HB 214)
- New mandate regarding CARA (Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act)

“These punitive approaches have been trialed in other states and the research demonstrates harm. This shortsighted approach will not encourage people to seek substance use treatment and fewer mothers will be ready and stable to parent. Instead, they will avoid disclosing their use, seeking timely care and perhaps will even give birth outside of hospitals. There will be no incentive to discuss their addiction, because the fear of losing their babies will be too great. **The very lives we hope to save will be threatened.**”

— Dr. Francheska Gurulé

Who are among those “most vulnerable” or “most impacted” by maternal health inequities?

- Racialized populations, particularly Native American and Black pregnant people
- Pregnant people who use substances, including alcohol
- Young parents, particularly “teen parents”

Maternal Health advocates and resources:

Tewa Women United

New Mexico Doula Association

Substance Use Disorder in Pregnancy ECHO Program

Navajo Birthworker Collective

New Mexico Midwives of Color

NM Breastfeeding Taskforce

Maternal Health advocates and resources:

Changing Woman Initiative (Albuquerque)

Breath of My Heart (Española)

Three Suns Birth Center (Roswell)

Vida Midwifery (Las Cruces)

W.K. Kellogg Foundation & HRSA

Navajoland-NURSE

Caring with Courage: Navajo Doulas Improving Birth Experiences in New Mexico



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