

# MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19: POLICIES & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

BRIDGET A. MIRANDA, MSN, FNP-C, DOCTORAL STUDENT

## Project Aim

- Examination of the relevant global, national, and local policies, as well as professional practice guidelines related to Maternal Mental Health.
- Focus on the impact during COVID-19 and identifying strategies to deter long term effects on mothers, infants, families and communities.

**64%**  
Sixty-four percent of mothers experience some type of psychological stress 10% more incidence in mothers with very preterm infants (Harris et al., 2018).

**MOTHERS WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS**

**20%**  
The prevalence of Postpartum Depression is nearly 20% globally (WHO, 2021).

**POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**

Households with low incomes report higher maternal depressive symptoms (Garfield et al., 2016).

In Collaboration with

Azusa Pacific University

Center for Better Beginnings

Partners for Better Health  
Randall Lewis  
Health & Policy Fellowship

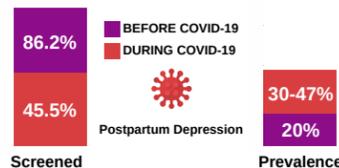


Figure 1. Select Evidence in the Literature: Screening and Prevalence for Postpartum Depression as reported during 2020-2021.

## POLICY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Bringing Postpartum Depression Out of the Shadows Act of 2015:

- State grants for culturally competent programs for screening and treatment during pregnancy up to 12 months postpartum.

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists:

- Screen for postpartum depression and anxiety with validated instrument during parental visit and postpartum visit.

Requires hospitals to educate/inform Hospital Employees, Women & Families about the signs & symptoms of maternal mental health disorders, treatments, & community resources by 2020.

American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Screen for postpartum depression at the 1-, 2-, 4-, & 6-month well child visits.

International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics provides interim guidance for COVID-19.

- **Mother/baby separation may impede bonding & breastfeeding causing postpartum stress.**
- **Healthcare providers should screen for depression, anxiety & suicidal ideation.**



Figure 2. Policy and Professional Practice Timeline

## Proposed Maternal Mental Health Screening Timeline

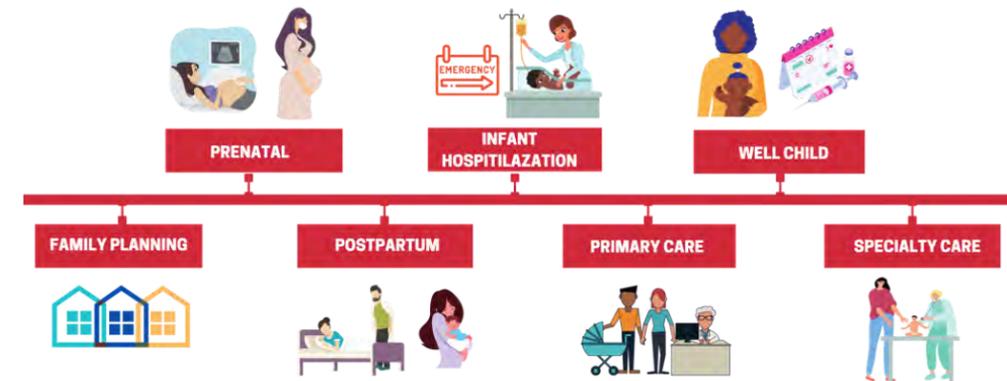


Figure 3. Proposed Timeline for Maternal Mental Health Screening

## Public Health Implications

### A Rapid Response to Maternal Mental Health during COVID-19.

- As a paramount public health issue, maternal mental health affects pregnancy, breastfeeding and the overall health and development of the mother/baby dyad.
- The Global Alliance for Maternal Mental Health emphasizes the importance of addressing maternal mental health by preventing what could lead to tragedy and suffering of women and families (2020). Identifying maternal mental health disorders deters the deleterious effects on the mother, child, family and communities (Sloman et al., 2019).
- To decrease the pre-existing disparities, equitable and culturally appropriate intervention is warranted.
- Expansion of consistent healthcare coverage to fund the cost of screening and treatment needs to be prioritized.
- COVID-19, a major public health event calls for a rapid response requiring systematic screening and treatment throughout the continuum of maternal and pediatric care.

