



Policy Brief from the Office of Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner

February 2016

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Average Daily Statistics in New York State:

- 950 women become pregnant
- 645 babies are born

Source: NY State Department
of Health

10-20 %

- Prenatal Depression: 10-20% of pregnant women
- Postpartum Depression: 10-20% of new mothers

Source: NY State Department of
Health

Why maternal depression is a New York problem

Information obtained from the New York State Department of Health indicates that 10-20% of new mothers suffer from maternal depression, including periods of sadness, anxiety, fatigue and thoughts of death or suicide. For more than 1 out of every 1,000 new mothers, the maternal depression they experience - also known as postpartum depression includes more severe symptoms such as postpartum psychosis that can lead to hallucinations and mania. A little diagnosed medical condition, maternal depression is believed to have contributed to the deaths of several infants who were allegedly killed by their mothers in separate incidents that took place in New York City in the late summer and early fall of 2015.

Raising awareness and eliminating any barriers for treatment for this crippling depression will preserve safety for newborns and their mothers and increase awareness around maternal depression.

Legislation:

Assembly Bill A.8597: The Infant Safety Act of 2015 will appropriate \$20 million to the Department of Health to support the Public Awareness Campaign for Maternal Depression. The enactment of this legislation will mark approval of the first statewide program of its kind in New York's history and will provide an unprecedented commitment of public resources to address this serious public health issue.

Message from Assemblywoman Joyner:

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families who have lost loved ones due to postpartum depression; this disorder and its symptoms can be treated with available medical preventative measures. The gift of motherhood is a gift that is appreciated by all loved ones. We must ensure that future generations are not hurt by this treatable disorder, and raising awareness can help ensure treatments are available for mothers, their newborns and their families.