

Mapping Maternal Health Disparities in Maine/LD 1113

Project Overview:

Maternal health and mortality in Maine, and the United States, is among the worst in the developed world. The burden of this ill health falls disproportionately on women of color, Black and Indigenous women, and low-income and rurally located women. To address this need, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations has been directed to conduct a study ([through LD 1113](#)). The Permanent Commission shall:

- “study the extent of disparities in access to prenatal care for the State's racial, indigenous and tribal populations through data and other information;
- “study the causes of the disparities in access to prenatal care, including through interviews with those women who had no prenatal visit until the last trimester or had no prenatal care at all; and
- “recommend solutions to disparities in access to prenatal care in the State.”

The Permanent Commission (PC) will work with a research partner to identify qualitative and quantitative information, convene a group of stakeholders to develop policy solutions to inform the report, and share the results widely. The [MWL Education Fund](#), a 501c3 nonprofit which exists to identify research, education, and action to address gender disparities in Maine, will coordinate this effort on behalf of the PC.

Project Timeline:

October. Identify research partner (the Cutler Institute of Health at the Muskie School of Public Service), convene Advisory Committee

November. Research is ongoing; interviews will take place

December. Interim report and feedback from research partner

January '22: Final research, identification of policy priorities

February '22: Present findings to the public and Legislature

Advisory Committee Role:

The work will be guided by a small advisory committee of advocates and subject-area experts working in maternal health and racial and indigenous health disparities. The committee will meet three times - at the project initiation (October/November), in the interim for a progress report, and when the research is complete (January) to support the development of policy recommendations based on the data. The Committee will offer feedback on data collection, brainstorm policy solutions, and identify the best method for sharing the results widely. Advisory Committee members will receive a stipend for their time, expertise, and lived experience.