

Duckworth Emphasizes The Urgency Of Addressing The Maternal Mortality Crisis At Idph's Virtual Maternal Health Summit

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) stressed the need to address the nation's maternal mortality rates and the importance of supporting policies for new and expecting parents during today's Illinois Department of Public Health Maternal Health Summit.

In the virtual event, Duckworth spoke about her years-long efforts to help improve and save the lives of new mothers—especially Black mothers—who are disproportionately impacted by this crisis.

“It’s simple: we’re one of the wealthiest nations on the planet, we shouldn’t be among the most fatal for new moms in the developed world too, especially for women of color and those living in underserved or rural areas,” Duckworth said. “Think about that in human terms. Think about how many daughters will grow up with their mothers by their sides, or how many little boys will get to have their moms teach them to tie their shoes if we confront this. This isn’t some catch-22; there are real, and easy-to-implement, solutions that could help end this crisis.”

Earlier this year, Duckworth and U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) [announced](#) that a provision based off their bicameral [*Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness \(MOMMA’s\) Act*](#), sponsored in the House by U.S. Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), was included in the American Rescue Plan. The provision gives states a five-year option to extend health care coverage for new moms on Medicaid from 60 days after pregnancy to a full year. Following the provision being included, Duckworth [helped lead](#) 14 Senators and 62 House Members in writing to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to request that CMS take immediate steps to implement the new State plan option authority granted by Congress in the American Rescue Plan.

Duckworth and Durbin also joined U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) in [introducing a resolution](#) recognizing Black Maternal Health Week, “to bring national attention to the maternal health crisis in the United States and the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing persons.” In April, Duckworth, along with Kelly, Durbin, and U.S. Representative Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14) [met virtually](#) with maternal and child health advocates and IDPH’s Dr. Ngozi Ezike, to discuss Illinois’ 1115 waiver, which will extend health care coverage for new moms on Medicaid in Illinois from 60 days after pregnancy to a full year.