STATE & TERRITORY POLICY STRATEGIES SUPPORTING MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH DURING COVID-19

In June and July of 2020, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) surveyed executive branch officials regarding state policies to safeguard against COVID-19 for pregnant women, postpartum women, and infants. Thirty-eight states and territories representing politically and geographically diverse jurisdictions completed this survey, giving a broad picture of how states and territories are working within existing policies and making adaptations to respond to the pandemic. Responses represent a point-in-time and may not reflect future policies/programs given the ever changing state of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has exacerbated systematic inequalities affecting communities of color. Black women have historically been at a higher risk of maternal mortality and morbidity and Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women are disproportionately represented among pregnant women with COVID-19. Nine states reported requiring training or offering enhanced resources regarding implicit bias training and fourteen states are in planning phases. There remain significant opportunities for action in this area.

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration released guidance in March 2020 for state and territorial Title V directors on how they can utilize funding during the pandemic. Thirty states reported that they use this funding to support surveillance infrastructure to better track COVID positive cases among the MCH population and extend accessibility and availability of telehealth services.

The NGA Center would like to thank the state officials and other experts who participated in this survey and provided feedback on the publication.

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