



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report: *Racial Disparities in Maternal Health***

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released the report, [\*Racial Disparities in Maternal Health\*](#). The report examines the federal role in addressing racial disparities in maternal health, including negative pregnancy-related health outcomes and pregnancy-related deaths of women in the United States. As attention of these disparities increases, so does the focus on disparities such as, Black women in the U.S. are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women in the U.S., and Native American women are more than two times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women in the U.S. These disparities have become more severe over the last thirty years.

Testimony received by the Commission shows the federal government can play an influential role in reducing racial disparities in maternal health outcomes. Improving access to quality maternity care for women is critical, including preconception and inter-conception care to manage chronic illness and optimize health; prenatal care; delivery care; and postpartum care for 12 months post-delivery, all of which is necessary for improving pregnancy-outcomes.

“At the federal level,” **Norma V. Cantú**, Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights notes, “efforts can be made to improve hospital quality, particularly for women of color if maternal health disparities are to be eliminated. Improvements in safety culture are linked with improved maternal health outcomes. One recommendation for improving safety in maternal healthcare is to implement standardized care practices across hospitals and health systems and to standardize data collection systems.”

The Commission held a [public virtual briefing](#) on this subject in November 2020 to collect information from subject matter experts such as government officials, academics, healthcare providers, advocates, and impacted persons. We invite you to [view](#) the virtual briefing on the Commission’s YouTube page. The [Colorado](#) and [South Dakota](#) State Advisory Committees to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights also collected and provided testimony on related civil rights issues within their respective jurisdictions.

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*The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 56 state and territory Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: In our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For more information about the Commission, please visit [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*