STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

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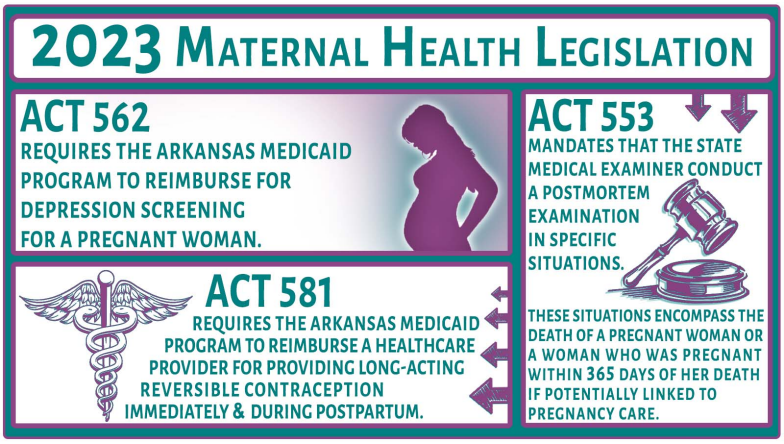
Improving Maternal Health in Arkansas



This week, several members attended a Maternal Health Roundtable at UAMS. The roundtable included Arkansas medical professionals discussing maternal health alongside Governor Sanders, Senator John Boozman, and Congressman French Hill.

Arkansas faces one of the nation's highest maternal mortality rates, prompting discussions on improving access to maternal care in rural areas, especially with only 35 hospitals in the state offering active labor and delivery units.

Addressing maternal health has been a key focus for the Arkansas General Assembly, notably through Act 829 of 2019 establishing the Maternal Mortality Review Committee, aiming to pinpoint prevention strategies by examining pregnancy-associated deaths.

The Committee's latest report highlighted 100 pregnancy-associated deaths out of 108,517 live births between 2018 and 2020, underscoring disparities among minorities and identifying cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular conditions, and hypertensive disorders as top underlying causes.

In 2023, we addressed maternal health with the passage of Act 562, Act 581 and Act 553.

Act 562 requires the Arkansas Medicaid Program to reimburse for depression screening for a pregnant woman.

Act 581 requires the Arkansas Medicaid Program to reimburse a healthcare provider for providing long-acting reversible contraception immediately and during postpartum.

Act 553 mandates that the state medical examiner conducts a postmortem examination in specific situations. These situations encompass the death of a pregnant woman or a woman who was pregnant within 365 days of her death if potentially linked to pregnancy care.

Moving forward, the General Assembly will continue scrutinizing the Committee's recommendations. The report is available HERE.