STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

# Arkansas House Newsletter

January 3, 2025

## Addressing Maternal Health

Maternal health will likely be a key focus of the 2025 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly as lawmakers work to address an ongoing challenge in our state.

Addressing maternal health will not only save lives but will also strengthen Arkansas families and communities. Currently, Arkansas faces one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the nation. More than 60% of Arkansas counties have limited maternity care, and many counties have none at all.

Limited access to quality health care before, during, and after pregnancy creates serious risks for families.

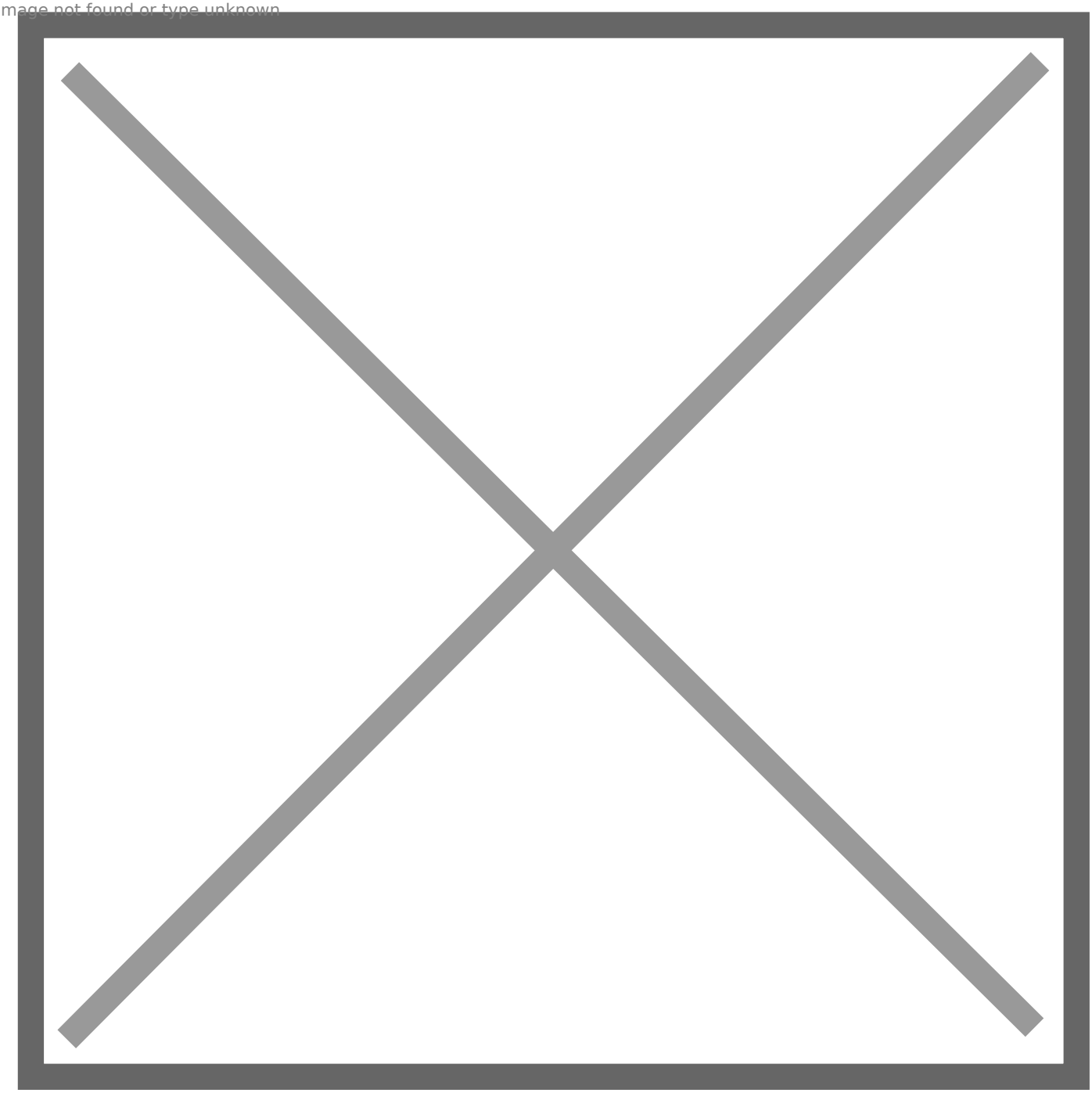
In March 2024, Governor Sanders signed an Executive Order to Support Moms, Protect Babies, and Improve Maternal Health. The order established the Arkansas Strategic Committee for Maternal Health, which brought together over 100 stakeholders representing organizations from across the state.

The committee’s comprehensive report offers several recommendations to address the maternal health crisis, including:

- Creating Medicaid pathways for doulas and community health workers as provider types with reimbursable services.
- Expanding prenatal care services at local health units where care is currently limited or unavailable.
- Establishing a Family Medicine Obstetrics Fellowship and exploring the creation of obstetrics and gynecology residencies and a school of midwifery in Arkansas.
- Considering the establishment of maternal health homes and expanding the Life360 Maternity Care Homes program.

The proposals represent solutions to combat the maternal health disparities affecting our communities and ensure that every Arkansan has access to the support and care they need during one of life's most critical moments.

The Governor's budget proposal also includes $13 million in new Medicaid funding for recommendations made by the committee.

The General Assembly will convene on January 13, 2025. All meetings of the House of Representatives will be streamed live and available for replay at arkansashouse.org.

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