



# **WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS**

**Maternity Care Deserts and the Crisis of Access and Equity**

**MASSACHUSETTS**



# MARCH OF DIMES MASSACHUSETTS

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# MATERNITY CARE DESERTS

An aerial photograph of a city landscape. In the foreground, a large, rectangular construction site is visible, with a concrete foundation and some structural elements. A highway runs vertically through the middle ground, separating a residential area with houses and trees on the left from a more industrial or undeveloped area on the right. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

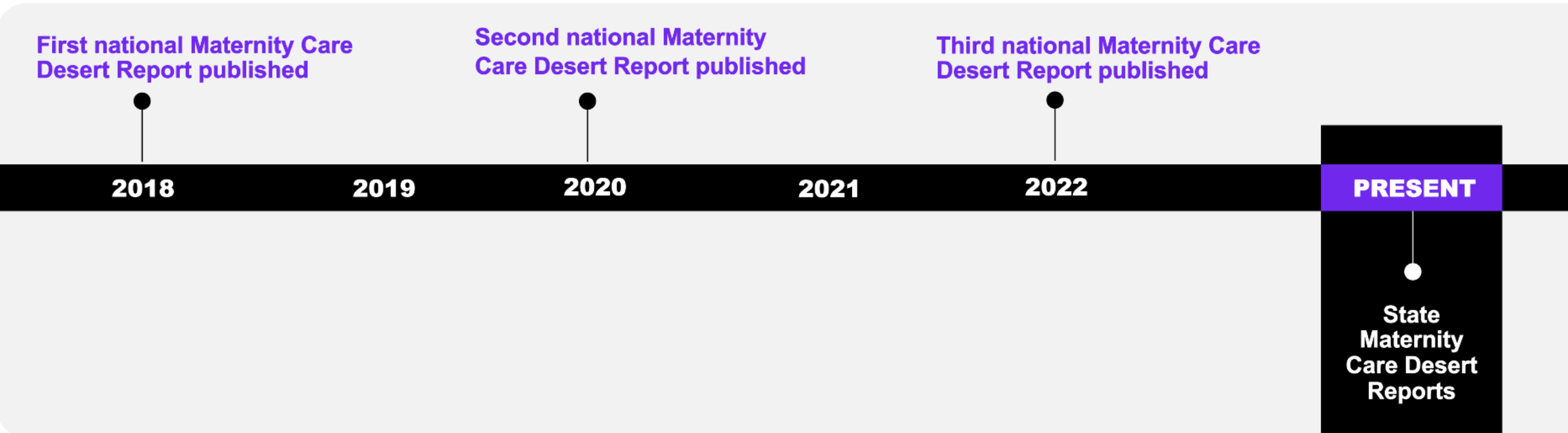
**Maternity Care Deserts**  
**are counties where**  
**there's a lack of maternity**  
**care resources with no**  
**hospitals or birth centers**  
**offering obstetric care and**  
**no obstetric providers**



# MARCH OF DIMES MATERNITY CARE DESERTS REPORT HISTORY

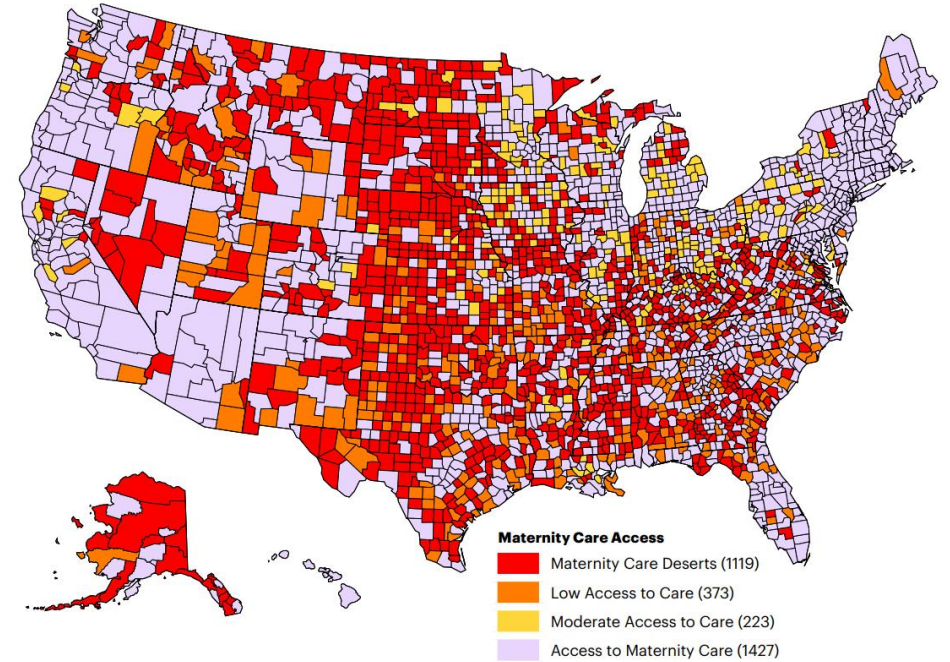
March of Dimes has explored access to maternity care in America through our Maternity Care Deserts reports since 2018. Now, we're going even farther.

In 2023 we released expanded, in-depth, state-specific reports that examine not only maternity care deserts but other factors that impact access to care and health outcomes for pregnant individuals



# The U.S. remains among the most dangerous developed nations for childbirth.

**5.6 MILLION** women live in areas with low access to maternity care



Source: U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Area Health Resources Files, 2021.

**2** women/birthing persons will die from pregnancy-related causes **today and every day**

**2 babies** will die **every hour** in the U.S.

Pregnancy-related deaths have **more than doubled** in the last 30 years

**2.2 million+** women / birthing persons live in maternity care deserts with **no** hospital offering obstetric care

**350,000+** babies are born to women / birthing persons living in counties with **limited or no access** to maternity care



**Families face too many obstacles already.  
Getting the care they need shouldn't be  
this difficult.**

# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MATERNITY CARE DESERTS AND THE CRISIS OF ACCESS AND EQUITY

## 52 Supplemental Reports

All 50 States, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico

- **Examine geographic distance between homes and OB providers/facilities at the time of birth**
- **Sub-analysis on the effects of poverty, housing cost, and racial segregation on adequacy of prenatal care**
- **Map of family planning services availability**
- **Analysis of chronic health conditions and association with birth outcomes**
- **Policy and practice recommendations to improve access to care**





# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

**100% of counties are defined as full access compared to 54.8% in the U.S.**

**4.9%**

**of women / birthing persons had no birthing hospital within 30 minutes driving distance (based on no traffic) compared to 11.7% in the U.S.**

**9.7%**

**of women / birthing persons received inadequate prenatal care compared to 14.8% in the U.S.**

**LOW**

**Women / birthing persons have a low vulnerability to adverse outcomes due to the availability of reproductive healthcare services**

**48%**

**Women / birthing persons with chronic health conditions are 48% more likely to experience preterm birth compared to women / birthing persons with none**

# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

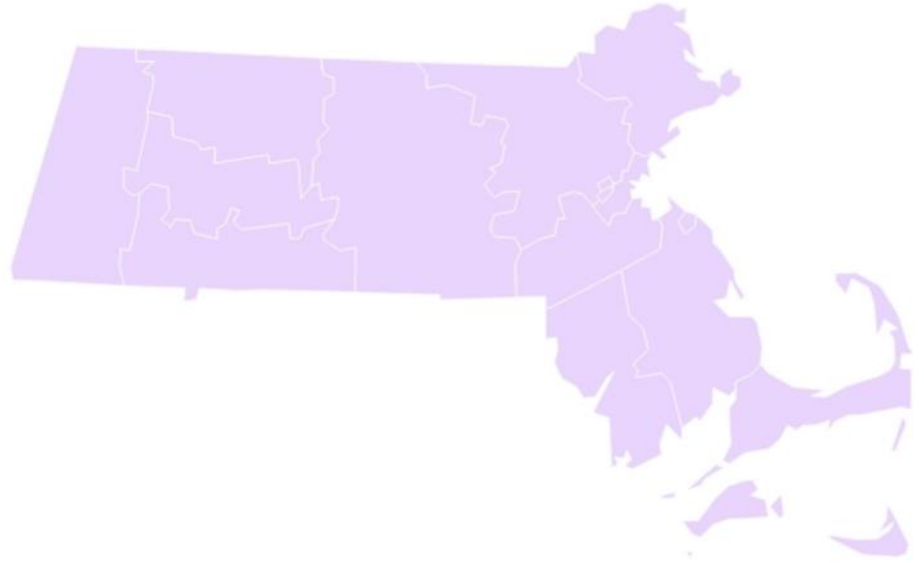
## MATERNITY CARE DESERTS

**The number of Massachusetts birthing hospitals declined 3% between 2019 - 2020**

**0.5% of babies were born to women / birthing persons living in rural counties**

**\* Approximately 345 babies**

**\*Rural counties defined as those with a total population of 2,500 to 19,999, were not adjacent to a metropolitan area, or were completely rural**



**Maternity care desert**  


**Low access**  


**Moderate access**  


**Full access**  


# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

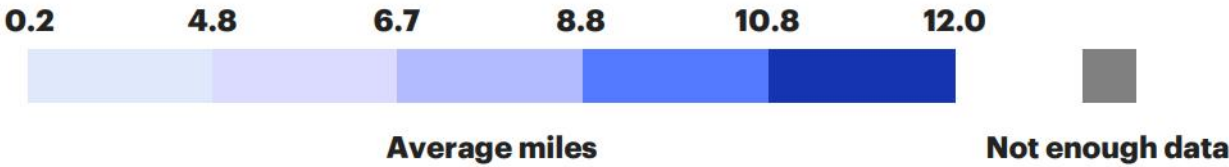
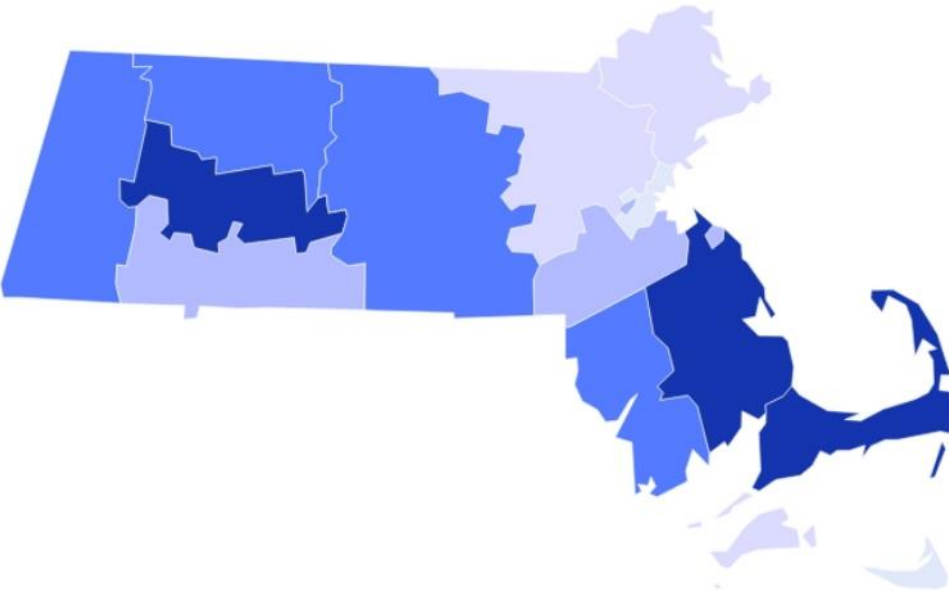
## DISTANCE TO MATERNITY CARE

**On average, Massachusetts families travel 6.9 miles and 13.8 minutes to their nearest birthing hospital**

**Counties with the longest travel times had an average distance of 12 miles and 20.6 minutes**

**4.9% of families in Massachusetts had no birthing hospital within 30 minutes**

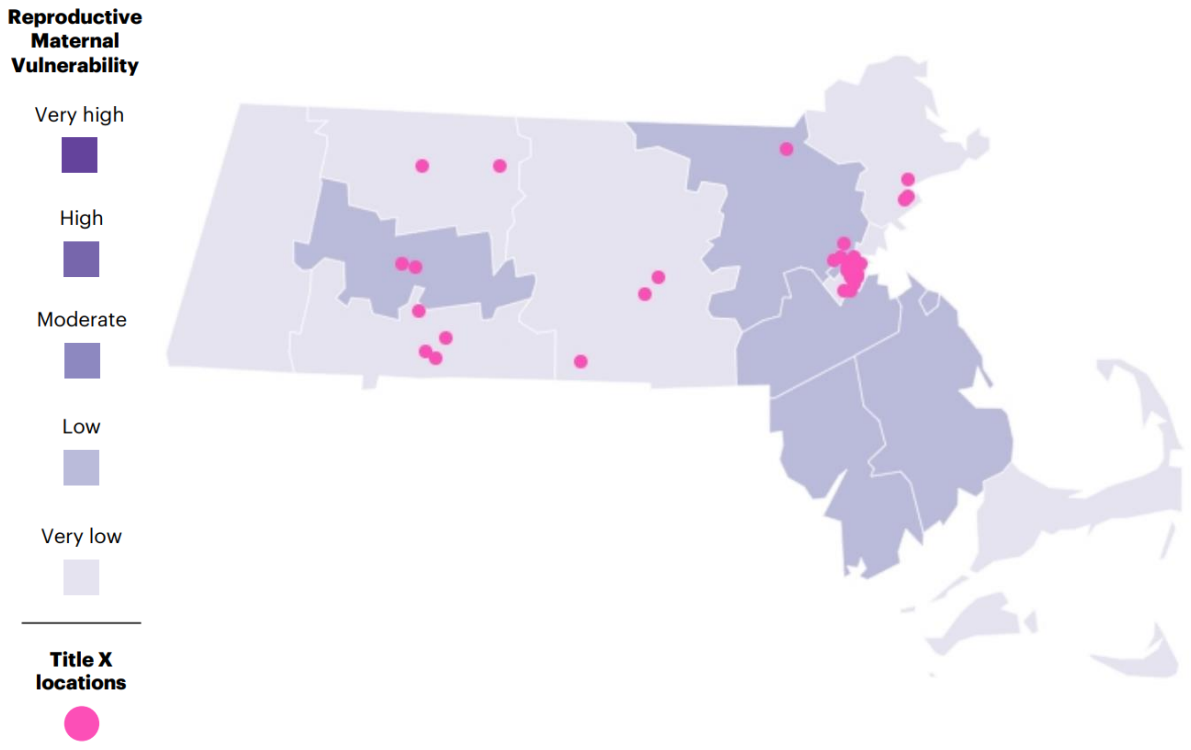
**Families living in urban areas traveled an average of 6.9 miles compared to rural families traveling an average of 3.6 miles**



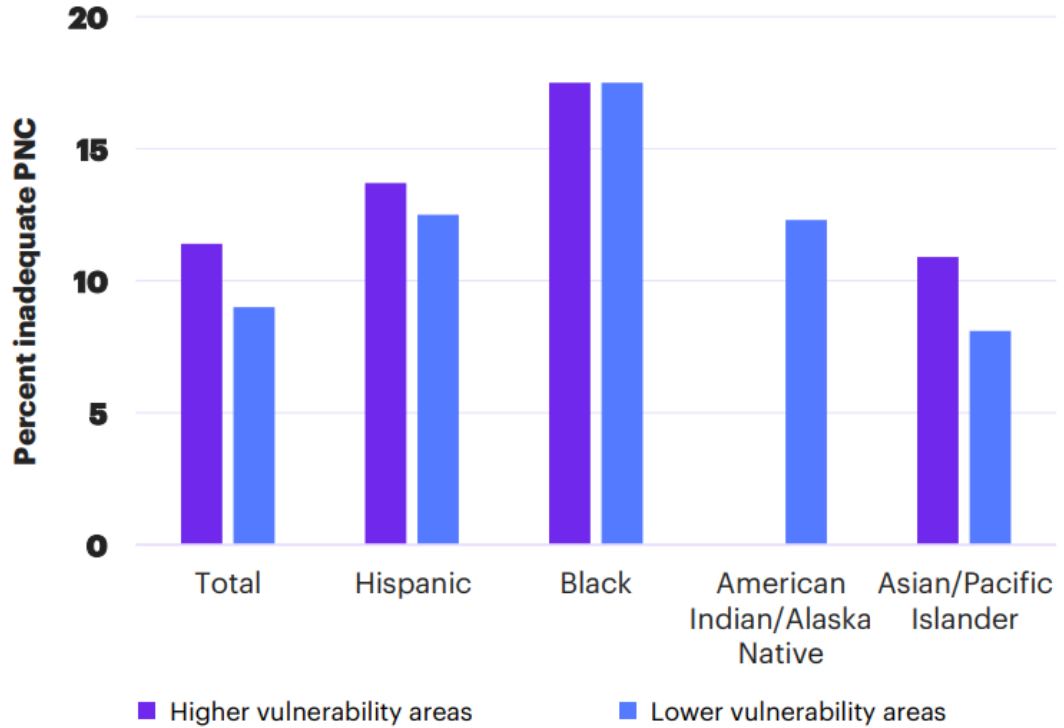
\*Based on automobile travel with no traffic

# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

## AVAILABILITY OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES



**There are 2.2 Title X clinics per 100,000 women / birthing persons in Massachusetts compared to 5.3 per 100,000 in the U.S.**



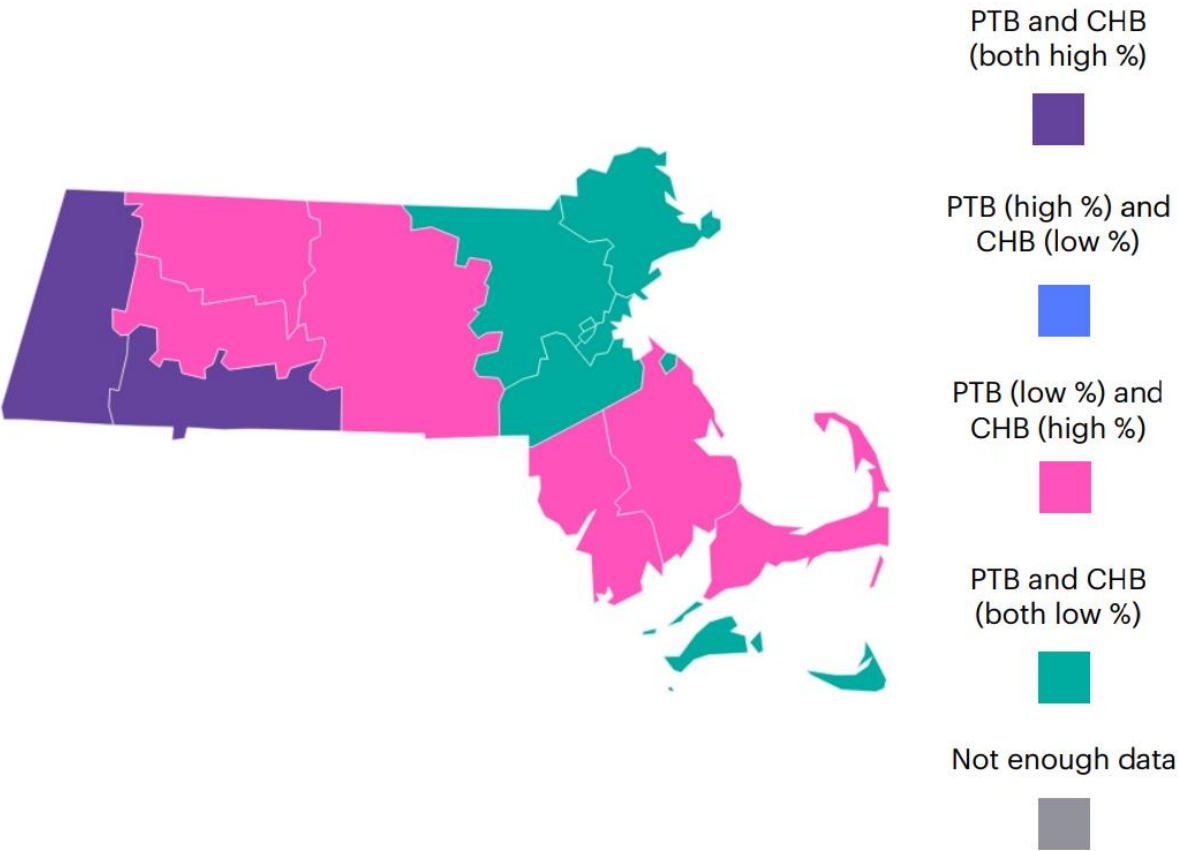
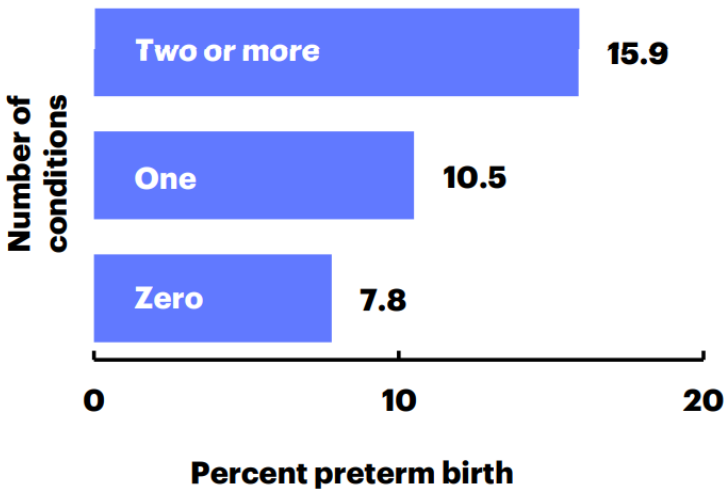
**Black women / birthing persons in Massachusetts receive inadequate prenatal care at a rate far greater than all other races, regardless of whether or not they live in higher or lower vulnerability areas**

# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

## CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS AND PRETERM BIRTH

**31.5% of women / birthing persons in Massachusetts had 1+ chronic health conditions compared to 37.8% in the U.S.**

**14.3% of counties in Massachusetts have a high burden of chronic health conditions and high rates of preterm birth**



# WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS: MASSACHUSETTS

## POLICY SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS



### TELEHEALTH LAW

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), states expanded access to telehealth services. While many of the policies increased access to telehealth for maternity care services temporarily, many states permanently expanded telehealth services. This policy measure identifies whether Massachusetts has passed laws to permanently provide Medicaid telehealth coverage for maternity care services.<sup>22,23</sup>



### TELEHEALTH COVERAGE

Medicaid telehealth policies vary by state. States may cover all forms of telehealth services or restrict certain forms of telehealth services.<sup>22</sup> This policy measure identifies whether Massachusetts provides Medicaid reimbursement of the following telehealth services:

- ✓ Live video
- ✓ Remote patient monitoring
- ✓ Audio-only<sup>22</sup>



✓ Meets recommendations

\* Progressing toward recommendations

✗ Needs improvement

**Midwife-led birth center in Beverly has delivered its last baby**

**Politicians, local advocates protest Leominster  
birth center closure plan**

**Compass Medical Announces It is Closing All Offices**

**Tufts Medical Center plans to close its children's hospital**

**Healthcare experts concerned with upcoming  
closure of 3 Baystate Urgent Care centers**

**Brockton Hospital may remain closed into 2024  
after devastating fire**

**Norwood Hospital remains closed – and the Norwood  
community feels the strain**

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**The March of Dimes Advocacy Action Network is a grassroots effort to bring together advocates across the U.S. for both federal state policy change.**

**Sign up for the Massachusetts network to receive action alerts for key maternal and infant health policy updates and opportunities!**





**THANK YOU!**

**QUESTIONS?**

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