

Maternal Health Care Among Immigrant New Yorkers¹

Access to health care before, during and after pregnancy provides women² with healthier pregnancies and childbirth experiences as well as the ability to maintain their health beyond pregnancy. But current Medicaid rules limit the availability of health care to women before and after pregnancy depending on their immigration status.

Compared to women born in the U.S., women who are immigrants are:

- **Less likely** to have a visit with a family doctor or obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN) before pregnancy
- **Less likely** to receive dental care before or during pregnancy
- **More likely** to lose health insurance after giving birth



Women who are immigrants may also experience poorer access to maternal health care if they:

- Have been in the U.S. for less than five years
- Immigrated from Central America, South America, Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia

What can your organization do to improve the experience and health of women who are immigrants?

- Ensure they know about their rights to accessing quality health care, including respectful maternity care.
- Promote their access to and use of health care before, during and after pregnancy.
- Provide additional support, such as information about financial and legal resources, to women who recently immigrated to the U.S.
- Support policies that reduce barriers to health care, including expanding public insurance to cover women regardless of immigration status.

Resources

- Visit nyc.gov/health and search for **respectful care at birth** to learn more about the **NYC Standards for Respectful Care at Birth**.
- To get involved in advocacy efforts, visit everymothercounts.org/advocacytoolkit.
- For health insurance resources for New Yorkers who are immigrants or pregnant, visit nyc.gov/ochia and search for **immigrants** or **pregnant**.
- To access health insurance fact sheets in multiple languages, visit nyc.gov/ochia and search for **health insurance fact sheets**.
- For information about Health Data for New York City projects, visit nyam.org/hd4nyc/our-work. For questions about the data in this flyer, contact prams@health.nyc.gov.

¹This flyer presents results from the following Health Data for New York City research project, which uses data from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (NYC PRAMS), 2016–2018: Maru S, Glenn L, Belfon K, et al. Utilization of maternal health care among immigrant mothers in New York City, 2016–2018. *J Urban Heal*. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-021-00584-5>

²Survey participants were not asked about their gender identity; due to this limitation, the terms “woman” and “maternal” in this flyer include any person capable of being pregnant.