

# STATE OF ARKANSAS

## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

### PROCLAMATION

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME -- GREETINGS:

**E.O. 24-03: EXECUTIVE ORDER TO SUPPORT MOMS, PROTECT BABIES,  
AND IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH**

WHEREAS: Healthier moms have healthier pregnancies and healthier babies;

WHEREAS: The key to maternal health in Arkansas is overall women's health;

WHEREAS: Each year, nearly 10,000 pregnant women in Arkansas wait until after their first trimester of pregnancy to see a doctor;

WHEREAS: Each year, at least 1,100 pregnant women in Arkansas wait until they are in labor to see a doctor, which is nearly one out of every thirty-two pregnancies;

WHEREAS: Arkansas is the most pro-life state in the country; and

WHEREAS: We must address the prenatal care crisis, protect women, and support babies.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, acting under the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

- (1) That there shall be established the Arkansas Strategic Committee for Maternal Health (the "Committee").
  - a) The Committee shall be composed of:
    - i. The Secretary of the Department of Health;
    - ii. The Deputy Director for Public Health Programs;
    - iii. The Secretary of the Department of Human Services;
    - iv. The State Medicaid Director;
    - v. The Secretary of the Department of Education;
    - vi. The Arkansas Surgeon General; and
    - vii. The Chair of The Arkansas Maternal Mortality Review Committee.
  - b) The Committee shall engage legislators, advocacy organizations, health care providers, and other stakeholders in a Maternal

Health Working Group (the "Group") to provide input and support the development of a statewide Strategic Maternal Health Plan (the "Plan").

- (2) The Plan will develop strategies to:
  - a) Improve education regarding women's and maternal health, especially prenatal and postpartum visits;
  - b) Improve maternal health before, during, and after pregnancy;
  - c) Increase access to quality maternal health services; and
  - d) Improve statewide coordination for maternal health data and reporting.
  
- (3) Upon developing the Plan, the Committee and Group shall provide recommendations to the Governor on any specific actions or legislation needed to facilitate this Order's directive.
  
- (4) The Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Human Services, and Arkansas Surgeon General, in collaboration with stakeholders, shall:
  - a) Take immediate steps to enroll pregnant and postpartum women in Arkansas with available health coverage options, streamline coverage transition processes, and eliminate gaps in care;
  - b) Create a pilot program targeting five counties with low rates of prenatal care designed to increase the percentage of women who access prenatal care in the first trimester and reduce incidences of women who receive no prenatal care prior to delivery;
  - c) Reprioritize existing resources to develop a multi-agency maternal health education and advertising campaign;
  - d) Explore opportunities to foster maternal health innovations and improvements, including but not limited to grants, public-private partnerships, and changes to the Medicaid program;
  - e) Expand the use of evidenced-based healthcare treatment processes and protocols for pregnant and postpartum women across Arkansas hospitals;
  - f) Develop a statewide data and analytics reporting structure for maternal health; and
  - g) Explore strategies to expand telehealth, home visiting, doulas, community health workers, and other reforms identified by the Committee and Group.
  
- (5) Within six months of the effective date of this Order, the Committee shall provide the Governor with an update on the items listed in Section 4.

This Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive orders.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, in the year of our Lord 2024.



Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor



Attest



John Thurston, Secretary of State