CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON AWARENESS AND TREATMENT OF MATERNAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

2018 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Brian Zehnder
House Sponsor: Rebecca Chavez-Houck

LONG TITLE

General Description:
This resolution addresses health concerns involving maternal depression and anxiety.

Highlighted Provisions:
This resolution:
- raises awareness about maternal depression and anxiety; and
- encourages the state to take action to address this serious public health issue.

Special Clauses:
None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:
WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety is a serious public health issue in Utah;
WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety encompass a range of symptoms and mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and, in extreme cases, psychosis;
WHEREAS, at least one in eight new mothers experience maternal depression and anxiety;
WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety can affect a woman from the beginning of a pregnancy through one year after delivery;
WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety is the number one complication of
childbirth, with incidence rates higher than preterm births, low birth weight babies, and
gestational diabetes;

WHEREAS, when a mother experiences maternal depression and anxiety, it affects
family well-being and stability;

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety affect a woman's ability to care for
herself and engage in healthy parenting behaviors;

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety affects parent-child bonding, increases
family conflict, lowers rates of breast feeding, and can lead to less safe home environments for
children;

WHEREAS, children of affected mothers are at increased risk for serious health,
developmental, or behavioral conditions, which can affect the child's overall development and
growth;

WHEREAS, despite the prevalence and risks, there is a lack of awareness among the
public and providers, and many mothers feel reluctant to report symptoms or concerns; and

WHEREAS, there are evidence-based, cost-effective screening, detection, and
treatment options available for mothers and children, but they are not adequately or
consistently applied in Utah:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
Governor concurring therein, recognizes maternal depression and anxiety as a serious statewide
public health issue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor commit to
addressing maternal depression and anxiety at all levels, from individuals and families to
communities, organizations, systems, and state policies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the
Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, local health departments, and the
medical community to develop and utilize evidence-based approaches that:

(1) expand provider training, education and support, and a standard of care across
practices in perinatal and pediatric settings, including those working with mothers experiencing
substance use disorders;

(2) screen mothers throughout pregnancy and postpartum, including during their child's
well-child visit;
(3) increase public awareness and public education of maternal mental health disorders;
(4) expand statewide maternal mental health data collection, monitoring, and evaluation, and share information across state agencies, nonprofits, and local authorities through centralized systems;
(5) increase support for prevention and peer support models, including home visiting programs, community health workers, and other peer or in-home support models;
(6) embed maternal mental health into all statewide crisis response policies; and
(7) expand public and private models for prevention and care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge all offices and agencies in the state of Utah whose responsibilities include working with new mothers, families, and children, including the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and local health authorities, to become informed regarding the short-term and long-term impacts of maternal depression and anxiety so that evidence-based preventive care, early identification, and treatment services are available and accessible statewide for all women, and adverse consequences in children and families can be prevented.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and all local health departments.