



**American Academy of Nursing**  
*transforming health care policy and practice through nursing knowledge*

---

**American Academy of Nursing Releases Policy Brief on  
African-American Mothers' Persistent, Excessive Maternal Death Rates**

*New and Effective Policies Needed to Save the Lives of African-American Mothers*

**Washington, D.C. (July 23, 2018)** — The American Academy of Nursing today released a policy brief urging immediate attention be directed to reduce the persistent and disproportionately high rates of maternal deaths among African-American mothers.

Compared to other developed nations, the United States continues to experience high rates of maternal deaths - ranking 46th among its counterparts in maternal mortality in 2017. A closer look at this deficient standing reveals an even more alarming health finding: Maternal mortality rates for African-American mothers in the United States are higher than in all other developed countries as well as in many underdeveloped countries. In 2011-2013 there were 40.4 deaths per 100,000 live births for black women compared to 12.1 deaths per 100,000 births for white women during the same period.

The Academy's policy brief, "African-American mothers' persistent excessive maternal death rates," was published in the May-June 2018 issue of the Academy's journal, *Nursing Outlook*.

"The tragically high and persistent maternal death rates for African-American women in the United States demand an immediate and coordinated response by our nation's health, policy and political leaders," said Academy President Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FAAN. "The statistics are unacceptable and the staggering national loss of life, mothers, and families must be addressed."

The Academy recommends policies to combat longstanding inequities, gaps in care, and cultural biases which contribute to the persistent excessive maternal death rates of African-American mothers. Among these recommendations are: ensuring equitable insurance coverage and access to care for all women especially during the childbearing period; educating the healthcare workforce on diversity (generally and in midwifery), healthcare disparities, and cultural competence; and urging the examination of unconscious or implicit bias among healthcare professionals. In addition, the Academy recommends the collection and use of additional data including more comprehensive and consistent data on African-American mothers across all states.

Read the full policy brief: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2018.03.006>

# # #

**The American Academy of Nursing ([www.AANnet.org](http://www.AANnet.org))** serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. The Academy's more than 2,500 fellows are nursing's most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice, and research. They have been recognized for their extraordinary contributions to nursing and healthcare.

**CONTACT:**

Barry Eisenberg  
202-777-1174  
[Barry\\_Eisenberg@aannet.org](mailto:Barry_Eisenberg@aannet.org)