



Press Release

The Facts on Maternal Mortality in the United States

ANDREW EVANS | SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

The United States has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the developed world, and that rate has only risen over the last two decades. In a new primer, AAF's Deputy Director of Health Care Policy Tara O'Neill Hayes and Carly McNeil examine the primary drivers of maternal deaths in the United States and several policy approaches for addressing it.

Their key points:

- The U.S. maternal mortality rate has significantly increased from 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 16.7 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016, and the data indicate more than half of these deaths are preventable;
- Unnecessary cesarean sections, limited receipt of proper prenatal and postnatal care, and racial or ethnic disparities are likely contributing to soaring mortality rates; and
- State maternal mortality review committees are increasingly considered necessary for collecting standardized data on pregnancy-related deaths and providing recommendations and strategies for effective interventions targeting quality and performance improvements.

[Read the analysis.](#)