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For Immediate Release

**FCC EXPLORES ROLE OF BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY IN
MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES**

***Updated Mapping Broadband Health in America Platform Incorporates Maternal
Health Data; Implements Data Mapping to Save Moms' Lives Act***

WASHINGTON, June 20, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today announced an important update to its [Mapping Broadband Health in America platform](#) to incorporate maternal health data, enabling policymakers, public health experts, clinicians, researchers, innovators, and other public and private stakeholders to better explore the intersection of broadband and maternal health. This tool is the latest step in the FCC's efforts to explore the role of broadband connectivity in improving maternal health.

“This country's rising maternal mortality rate demands every possible solution, and access to maternal care through telehealth is an important piece of that puzzle,” said Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel. “The FCC is playing an increasingly greater role in advancing connected health and our latest effort to explore the ways in which broadband access can have an impact on the health and wellness of moms and moms-to-be is crucial work. I thank our Connect2Health Task Force for their work on this platform and continued collaboration with the CDC and others to explore what our agencies can accomplish together to further address the maternal health crisis.”

The United States is the only developed country with increasing maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates, and research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that many of these deaths and complications are preventable. Furthermore, this nationwide crisis disproportionately impacts Non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native pregnant women at almost two to three times the rate of Non-Hispanic white pregnant women. Similarly, pregnant women living in rural areas without access to appropriate health care providers are 60% more likely to die than women living in non-rural areas.

In December 2022, President Biden signed into law the Data Mapping to Save Moms' Lives Act which directed the FCC to consult with the CDC and incorporate publicly available data on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity into this platform. In addition to mortality and morbidity data, the mapping platform now highlights the areas where critical telehealth resources are most needed, including by the millions of women living in “maternity care deserts,” which are areas of the country where there are no hospitals or birth centers offering obstetric care and no obstetric providers.

Through this latest broadband health data effort, the Mapping Broadband Health in America platform allows users to generate customized maps and view the intersection of broadband connectivity, maternal health outcomes, and selected risk factors in a number of ways. Specifically, the public can use this platform to:

- Intersect broadband data and maternal mortality or severe maternal morbidity rates at the state level.
- Determine how connectivity and access to obstetric care coincide at the county level, revealing “double burden” counties with high health need and lower connectivity resources.
- View connectivity metrics (e.g., internet adoption, download speed) and maternal health data filtered by rurality, race/ethnicity, and maternal age to visualize patterns, possible disparities, and areas where broadband-enabled interventions could create the greatest impact.
- Visualize the intersection of broadband and mental health provider shortages, given the association between mental health and poor maternal health outcomes. □

Recognizing that much work remains to meet the maternal health crisis and that broadband is of critical importance in that effort, the Commission plans to convene relevant stakeholders and seek public input in the coming months on how best to build on this important milestone.

Comments and suggestions from interested parties may be submitted via e-mail to engageC2H@fcc.gov, with “Mapping” in the subject line.

To learn more about the Mapping Broadband Health in America platform and access the maternal health data overlays, visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/connect2health/>.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).