

Disparities in Maternal Health

HEALTH CARE
NUTS AND BOLTS
with



There were over **400,000 births** in California in 2023 — almost 1 in 10 nationally. Among these births, around 70 individuals died, with a pregnancy-related mortality rate of **12.0 deaths per 100,000 live births**.

As severe maternal complications continue to rise, understanding **who is most affected** is critical to shaping maternal health policy.

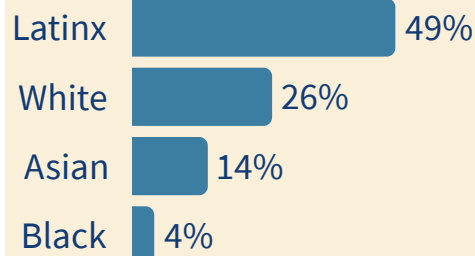
INSURANCE COVERAGE

41% births covered by
Medi-Cal in CA

53% births covered by
**private
insurance**

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Births in California



INCOME

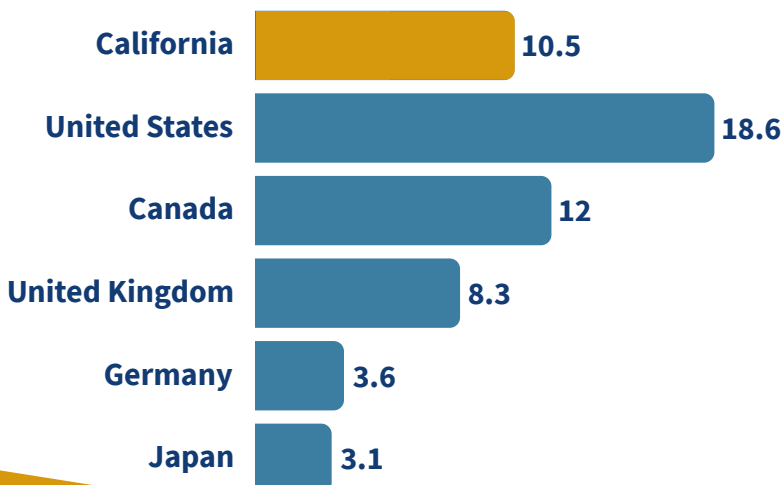
52%

CA births among
individuals with
household
incomes below
**200% of the
federal poverty
level (FPL)**

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy, occurring during pregnancy or within 42 days of its end.

Mortality Rate per 100,000 Live Births



PREGNANCY-RELATED MORTALITY

Deaths occurring during pregnancy or within one year after its end.

12.0

California's pregnancy-related mortality rate per 100,000 live births, compared with 18.7 nationally

3-4x

Black individuals are 3 to 4 times more likely than White individuals to experience severe complications or die during labor

California has one of the **lowest** pregnancy-related mortality rates of any state in the U.S.

DRIVERS OF DISPARITIES*

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

57%

Black and Latinx individuals who experienced **adverse or unfair treatment** during pregnancy or birth

PRE-PREGNANCY WEIGHT

7x

Pregnancy-related mortality was 7 times higher for those with a **body mass index over 40** versus under 25

OLDER MATERNAL AGE

5x

Mortality was 5 times higher for those **over 40 years old** than for those 20 to 24 years old

LOWER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

45.9

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 among those **without a high school diploma**, versus 8.8 among college graduates

UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES

4x

Maternal mortality was almost 4 times higher in the **least healthy communities** geographically versus the healthiest

LIMITED INSURANCE COVERAGE

3x

Maternal mortality rate was three times higher for those on **Medi-Cal** versus individuals with private insurance

*Data as of 2023

EFFORTS TO REDUCE DISPARITIES



Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act (SB 464, AB 2319): Requires implicit bias training for perinatal care providers



Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Bold Goals: Targets closing maternity care disparities for Black and Native American patients



California Momnibus Act (SB 65): Expands the midwifery workforce and establishes state review of pregnancy-related deaths



Medi-Cal Doula Benefit: Covers doula support during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum



California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative: Partners with state agencies, hospitals, and providers to develop toolkits, standardize care, and advance birth equity initiatives statewide

Read the full explainer at chbrp.org!