

# ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 219

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 17, 2019

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE**

**District 34 (Essex and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttler, Chaparro, Reynolds-Jackson and Tucker**

**SYNOPSIS**

Encourages DOH to develop set of standards for respectful care at birth and to conduct public outreach initiative.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/19/2019)

1   **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** encouraging the Department of Health  
2       to develop a set of standards for respectful care at birth and to  
3       conduct a public outreach initiative.  
4  
5   **WHEREAS**, One measure of a society’s development is its ability to  
6       protect mothers and babies in childbirth, yet the United States ranks  
7       amongst the worst nations in the world in the number of women  
8       who die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes each year; and  
9   **WHEREAS**, Maternal mortality is of particular concern in New Jersey,  
10       where the maternal mortality rate ranks fifth highest in the country,  
11       according to the 2018 edition of United Health Foundation’s  
12       “America’s Health Rankings”; and  
13   **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) is  
14       encouraged to take a meaningful step in improving maternal health  
15       outcomes and women’s experiences at childbirth by developing a  
16       set of standards for respectful care at birth, which recognizes  
17       women’s self-worth, feelings, choices, and preferences in their  
18       maternal health care; and  
19   **WHEREAS**, New York City can serve as a model for the DOH’s efforts  
20       in crafting standards for respectful care, as the city has implemented  
21       its Standards for Respectful Care at Birth, which detail health  
22       protections for pregnant women during and after childbirth; and  
23   **WHEREAS**, New York City’s standards assert that a safe birthing  
24       experience is a human right and focus on six areas of respectful  
25       care, namely education, informed consent, decision making, quality  
26       of care, support and dignity, and non-discrimination; and  
27   **WHEREAS**, The DOH is encouraged to engage in a public outreach  
28       initiative to promote these standards to women across the State and  
29       to urge maternity care providers and community-based  
30       organizations to integrate the new standards into their routine  
31       clinical care and community engagement; and  
32   **WHEREAS**, In conducting its outreach, New York City distributed  
33       posters outlining its standards to all 38 city maternity hospitals and  
34       other clinical providers, along with more than 100 community-  
35       based organizations; and  
36   **WHEREAS**, Implementing these standards and conducting Statewide  
37       public outreach will not only support women in becoming more  
38       active decision-makers in their birthing experience, but will also  
39       help providers in respecting and being more aware of their patients’  
40       rights and preferences during pregnancy, labor, and childbirth; and  
41   **WHEREAS**, Furthermore, a set of standards for respectful care at birth  
42       would help to reduce the stark racial gap that exists in maternal  
43       health outcomes, which particularly affects women of color; and  
44   **WHEREAS**, Statistics show that black infants in New Jersey are nearly  
45       50 percent more likely to be born underweight than white infants  
46       and that, in 2013, the pregnancy-related maternal death rate for  
47       white women in New Jersey was 12.8 deaths per 100,000 births  
48       compared to 46.5 deaths per 100,000 births for black women; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Integrating these standards into maternal health care will  
2 help foster an environment where women feel empowered to assert  
3 their rights and preferences in childbirth and where providers and  
4 patients work collaboratively to make decisions; now, therefore,

5  
6 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New  
7 Jersey:

8  
9 1. This House respectfully encourages the Department of  
10 Health to develop a set of standards for respectful care at birth,  
11 modeled after the Standards for Respectful Care at Birth  
12 implemented in New York City, and to conduct a public outreach  
13 initiative for promoting the standards to women and integrating the  
14 standards into routine clinical care and community engagement.

15  
16 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,  
17 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the  
18 Commissioner of the Department of Health.

19  
20  
21 **STATEMENT**

22  
23 This resolution encourages the New Jersey Department of Health  
24 (DOH) to develop a set of standards for respectful care at birth and  
25 to conduct a public outreach initiative to promote these standards to  
26 women and integrate the standards into routine clinical care and  
27 community engagement.

28 Despite technological and medical advances, the United States is  
29 one of the worst nations in the developed world when it comes to  
30 the number of women who die each year from pregnancy or  
31 childbirth-related causes. New Jersey particularly struggles with  
32 high maternal mortality, ranking fifth highest amongst all states in  
33 terms of its maternal mortality rate.

34 The DOH is encouraged to take a meaningful step in improving  
35 maternal health outcomes and women's experiences at childbirth by  
36 developing a set of standards for respectful care at birth. These  
37 standards should be modeled after New York City's Standards for  
38 Respectful Care at Birth. The standards were created to inform,  
39 educate, and support women giving birth, and detail health  
40 protections for pregnant women during and after childbirth. The  
41 standards focus on six areas of respectful care, namely: education,  
42 informed consent, decision making, quality of care, support and  
43 dignity, and non-discrimination.

44 The DOH is also encouraged to engage in a public outreach  
45 initiative to promote the standards among women across the State  
46 and to urge maternity care providers and community-based  
47 organizations to integrate the new standards for respectful care at  
48 birth into their routine clinical care and community engagement.

1 The New York City Department of Health distributed posters  
2 outlining its Standards for Respectful Care at Birth to all 38 city  
3 maternity hospitals and other clinical providers, along with more  
4 than 100 community-based organizations.

5 In addition to reducing maternal mortality and improving  
6 maternal health outcomes, implementing standards for respectful  
7 care at birth in New Jersey would support women in becoming more  
8 active decision-makers in their birthing experience, and would help  
9 providers in respecting and being more aware of their patients'  
10 rights and preferences during pregnancy, labor, and childbirth.  
11 These standards would also help reduce the stark racial gap that  
12 exists in maternal health outcomes, which particularly affects  
13 women of color. Statistics show that black infants in New Jersey  
14 are nearly 50 percent more likely to be born underweight than white  
15 infants. In 2013, the pregnancy-related maternal death rate for  
16 white women in New Jersey was 12.8 deaths per 100,000 births  
17 compared to a much higher 46.5 deaths per 100,000 births for black  
18 women.

19 Integrating these standards into maternal health care will help  
20 foster an environment where women feel empowered to assert their  
21 rights and preferences in childbirth and where providers and  
22 patients work collaboratively to make decisions.