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 Huttle, Chaparro, Reynolds-Jackson, Tucker, McKnight, Mosquera and Jasey

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on March 18, 2019, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/26/2019)
AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION encouraging the Department of Health
to develop a set of standards for respectful care at birth and to
class conduct a public outreach initiative.

WHEREAS, One measure of a society’s development is its ability to
protect mothers and babies in childbirth, yet the United States ranks
amongst the worst nations in the world in the number of women
who die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes each year; and
WHEREAS, Maternal mortality is of particular concern in New Jersey,
where the maternal mortality rate ranks fifth highest in the country,
according to the 2018 edition of United Health Foundation’s
“America’s Health Rankings”; and
WHEREAS, The New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) is
encouraged to take a meaningful step in improving maternal health
outcomes and women’s experiences at childbirth by developing a
set of standards for respectful care at birth, which recognizes
women’s self-worth, feelings, choices, and preferences in their
maternal health care; and
WHEREAS, New York City can serve as a model for the DOH’s efforts
in crafting standards for respectful care, as the city has implemented
its Standards for Respectful Care at Birth, which detail health
protections for pregnant women during and after childbirth; and
WHEREAS, New York City’s standards assert that a safe birthing
experience is a human right and focus on six areas of respectful
care, namely education, informed consent, decision making, quality
of care, support and dignity, and non-discrimination; and
WHEREAS, The DOH is encouraged to engage in a public outreach
initiative to promote these standards to women across the State and
to urge maternity care providers and community-based
organizations to integrate the new standards into their routine
clinical care and community engagement; and
WHEREAS, In conducting its outreach, New York City distributed
posters outlining its standards to all 38 city maternity hospitals and
other clinical providers, along with more than 100 community-
based organizations; and
WHEREAS, Implementing these standards and conducting Statewide
public outreach will not only support women in becoming more
active decision-makers in their birthing experience, but will also
help providers in respecting and being more aware of their patients’
rights and preferences during pregnancy, labor, and childbirth; and
WHEREAS, Furthermore, a set of standards for respectful care at birth
would help to reduce the stark racial gap that exists in maternal
health outcomes, which particularly affects women of color; and
WHEREAS, Statistics show that black infants in New Jersey are nearly
50 percent more likely to be born underweight than white infants

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [[thus]] in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
1Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted March 18, 2019.
and that, in 2013, the pregnancy-related maternal death rate for white women in New Jersey was 12.8 deaths per 100,000 births compared to 46.5 deaths per 100,000 births for black women; and

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

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

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

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