



Pennsylvania
**Department of Drug and
Alcohol Programs**



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services



Pennsylvania
Department of Health

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MEDIA CONTACT: Stephany Dugan, ra-dapressoffice@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Hosts Maternal Healthcare Roundtable with Pennsylvanians Affected by Substance Use Disorder to Inform Strategic Plan to Improve Maternal Health Outcomes

Since day one, Governor Josh Shapiro has been focused on addressing maternal health disparities in access to high-quality healthcare – he worked across the aisle to secure a \$2.6 million increase in the 2024-25 budget for maternal mortality prevention.

West Chester, PA – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Dr. Latika Davis-Jones**, along with leadership from the departments of **Human Services (DHS)** and **Health (DOH)**, joined substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers, those with lived experience, local government and judicial officials, and others for a roundtable discussion to seek feedback on the development of Commonwealth’s Maternal Health Strategic Plan specific to the SUD-related care for pregnant and postpartum women.

At the roundtable, Shapiro Administration leaders learned firsthand what barriers Pennsylvanians experience when trying to access SUD maternal health care and heard about the role stigma plays in accessing care.

“The Shapiro Administration understands the impact of substance use disorders on pregnant and postpartum women and their children,” said **Secretary Davis-Jones**. “DDAP and our sister agencies are committed to implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure that pregnant women don’t just survive before, during, and after pregnancy—but truly thrive.”

The goal of the plan will be to improve maternal health outcomes in Pennsylvania, particularly for Black women. Black women are nearly two times more likely to die during or in the first year of a pregnancy than white women, according to [DOH’s 2024 Pennsylvania Maternal Mortality Review](#).

Since taking office, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has prioritized addressing maternal health disparities. In the **2023-24 budget**, the Governor worked to secure the first-ever investment in addressing maternal mortality with **\$2.3 million** to expand maternal health programming and for the implementation of prevention strategies to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity. Governor Shapiro built on that success by securing an additional **\$2.6 million** increase in the **2024-25 budget** for maternal mortality prevention, managed through DOH.

“Hearing directly from community members on what is working and what is not for women with substance use disorder is needed to improve maternal, infant care, and family health,” said **DOH Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen**. “The information we receive from the listening session will help inform Pennsylvania’s maternal health strategic plan and ensure that pregnant women, their babies, and families receive the care they need.”

DHS oversees Pennsylvania’s Medicaid health insurance program, which covers about 30 to 40 percent of births in Pennsylvania. In 2024, DHS worked to strengthen the state’s Medicaid program by [expanding access to doulas for people who are Medicaid-eligible](#). This change means certified doulas can enroll as Medicaid providers and Medicaid managed care organizations may enter into network agreements with doulas so that they can bill directly for services offered through pregnancy and postpartum. In addition, DHS is currently working with the federal government to expand services available to support pregnant women covered by Medicaid.

“Pregnancy and the months after giving birth are an extremely delicate time. Having access to high quality physical and behavioral healthcare has positive lifelong effects for parents and their children. DHS is committed to working with community partners and advocates to identify and explore opportunities to strengthen the Medicaid program and the services offered,” said **DHS Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh**. “I am grateful to the representatives from Chester County, and to those with lived experience with substance use disorder for sharing their stories and helping to improve maternal health for all Pennsylvanians.”

Secretary Davis-Jones was joined by DDAP’s local partner in the overdose and opioid crises **Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services**, which is the Single County Authority (SCA) for drug and alcohol services in Chester County. The SCA administers a system of entry to outpatient and inpatient treatment services for uninsured and underinsured individuals regardless of the level of care needed.

“Treatment programs for women and women with children help to facilitate the discussion of topics that underlie a substance use disorder, including mental health, physical health, and the challenges of childcare and self-image,” said **Jamie Johnson, Executive Director of the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services**. “We continue to promote education safety with medication lock boxes and pill pods and have expanded our warm hand-off referral program to primary care and OBGYN providers.”

In addition, the roundtable brought together those who receive SUD services from treatment providers including Gaudenzia, which operates over 50 facilities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. [In 2024, Gaudenzia provided](#) lifesaving, evidence-based treatment to 520 women in its residential programs, including 87 who were pregnant at the time of admission. In addition, 374 children were able to stay alongside their mothers while they were enrolled in the residential program and 54 healthy babies remained with their mothers while in their maternal health programs.

“At Gaudenzia, we recognize the immense barriers pregnant and parenting women face when seeking care for substance use disorders—barriers often compounded by system involvement, social determinants of health, and complex family needs,” said **Dr. Deja Gilbert, Gaudenzia President and CEO**. “These numbers reflect the critical need for accessible, compassionate care, as well as the hope and healing our programs deliver. By collaborating with the DDAP and

listening to the voices of those we serve, we can continue to advance innovative solutions that address the root causes of substance use and empower families to thrive.”

More information on maternal-child health programs available across Pennsylvania is available on [DHS' website](#).

Pennsylvanians currently looking for SUD treatment options or information are encouraged to call the Get Help Now hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). In addition, Pennsylvanians can also use DDAP's free, fully online platform, called [Treatment Atlas](#), to confidentially find SUD treatment that meets their needs.

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