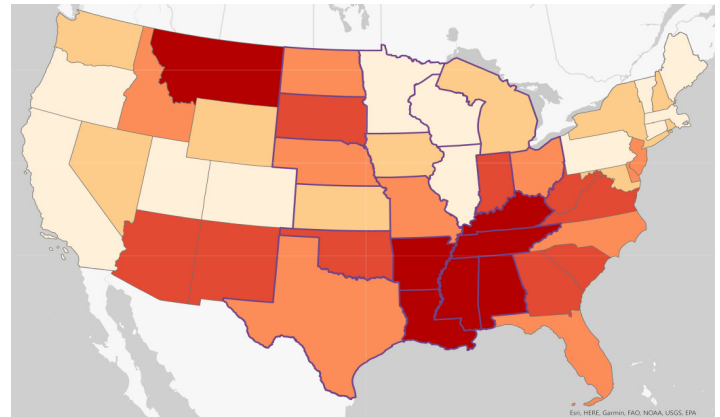


THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR INVESTING IN MATERNAL HEALTH

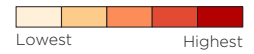
The U.S. currently has the highest rate of maternal deaths of all high-resource countries and is the only high-resource country with a rising maternal mortality rate in the last 20 years.

Heartland Forward released new research focused on four states – Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Ohio as well as a corresponding action plan to offer practical solutions for policymakers, providers, insurers, philanthropists and businesses working to improve outcomes for mother and child.

Heartland Forward’s desire is to increase a mother’s access to quality maternal health care through practical policy solutions.

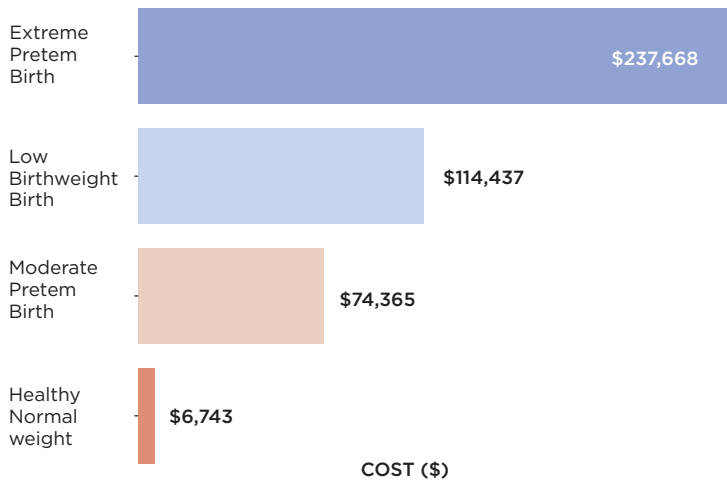


Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 live Births



THE ECONOMIC CASE

Cost disparity between healthy and undesirable birth outcomes, U.S., 2020



Maternal health care is primarily about protecting the health and life of mother and child during and after pregnancy. Secondly, maternal health care has sizable impacts on the workforce by ensuring that women are able to work, whether through the formal (employment or business ownership) or informal (volunteering, supporting their family, etc.) economies. According to data from 2018 to 2020, the economic impact of maternal mortality in the U.S. is significant — a lost potential human capital valued at around \$27.43 billion for the nation.

In addition, the enduring economic repercussions of adverse birth outcomes such as preterm birth affect both parents and children. As health care systems and policymakers strive to address the challenges of preterm births, understanding the broader economic implications, including the impact on workplace productivity and indirect costs, is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to mitigate these outcomes.

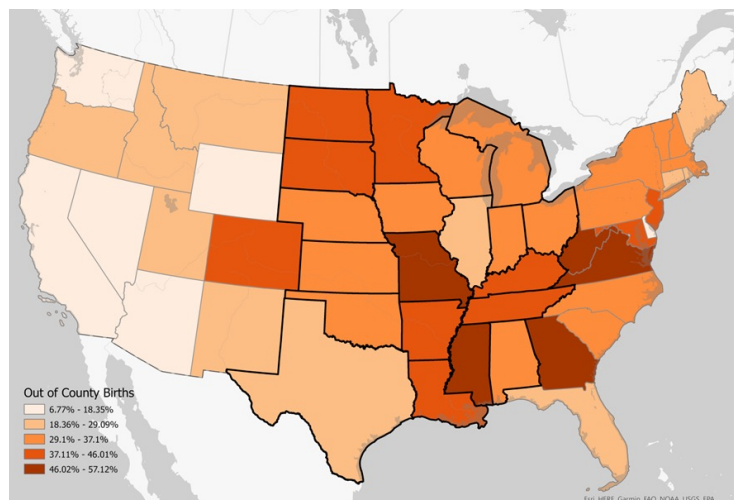
ACCESSIBILITY

The availability and accessibility of perinatal health care resources play a critical role in shaping health outcomes. Proximity to care is of utmost importance and there are other factors that prevent women from seeking care which contribute to the high costs of maternal mortality.

“Connection is everything. Women need connection, they need support. They need other people to talk to.”

— Jamie Starling, Licensed, Professional Counselor, New Path Mental Health and Wellness, Little Rock (AR)

Heartland states reveal a concerning pattern of high childbirth rates where the mother traveled to another county to receive care and deliver her baby. The out-of-county rate for Mississippi is 51%, (one of every two pregnant women deliver their baby in a county different from the one in which they live). In Arkansas and Louisiana rates are around 40%, while Ohio is better off with only 34% of women experiencing an out-of-county childbirth.



Average share of live births occurring outside of the mother’s county of residence, U.S., 2014-2020

RETHINKING THE APPROACH TO MATERNAL HEALTH CARE: HEARTLAND FORWARD ACTION PLAN TO ADVANCE MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

As a country and a heartland region, we must protect our children, families and mothers. We are focused on tangible solutions that can be universally applied across the heartland. Consistent with our mission to be a resource for state and local governments, Heartland Forward will work alongside our partners to address maternal health gaps through the following programming:

- 1. Supporting and advocating for Community Health Workers (CHWs)** with a public education campaign around the importance of CHWs while collaborating with the Heartland Health Caucus, policymakers, providers, insurers, industry leaders and other key stakeholders to expand the CHW presence within the maternal health care space.
- 2. Expanding access to telehealth** through the Connecting the Heartland initiative to accelerate the adoption of affordable high-speed internet and digital skills, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Simultaneously, leveraging the strength of the Heartland Health Caucus to inform policymakers about the importance of thoughtful and less-restrictive telehealth regulations.

- 3. Address workforce shortages across the health care industry.** The American health care system is experiencing a profound shortage of qualified caregivers, which has affected multiple areas of medicine including maternal care. One recommendation is to consider an expansion of the Missouri pilot to other states and communities with a focus on increasing access and reimbursements for doulas and midwives.
- 4. Increasing transparency in data collection and evaluation.** Heartland Forward strives to shine a light on opportunities for resources to enhance available care options and increase the accessibility of maternal care. Heartland Forward's Action Plan will be distributed to community partners, providers, insurers, policymakers and other key stakeholders throughout the 20 heartland states.

"I think we need to focus on patients. But I think the other piece is that we need to focus on our workforce... how do we build a compassionate health care workforce? How do we retain a skilled workforce?"

— Sarrah Evans, Certified Nurse-Midwife, Nest Health (LA)

SOLUTIONS NEEDED TO ADDRESS MATERNAL HEALTH CARE



Support and Expand the **Health Care Workforce** through doulas, midwives, OB-GYNs and Community Health Workers



Healthy Habits and Access to **Preventative Care**: primarily to prevent/treat obesity, diabetes, hypertension, smoking, substance use



Mental Health Services Awareness/Access



Health Literacy Education/Counseling



Innovative Ways to Improve Access to **Transportation**



Innovative Ways to Improve Access to **Child Care and Paid Family Leave**



Scan to read more about Heartland Forward's research on Maternal Health in the heartland