



CABINET FOR HEALTH  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

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KENTUCKY CABINET FOR  
HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

# **Maternal Health Update**

## **MAC**

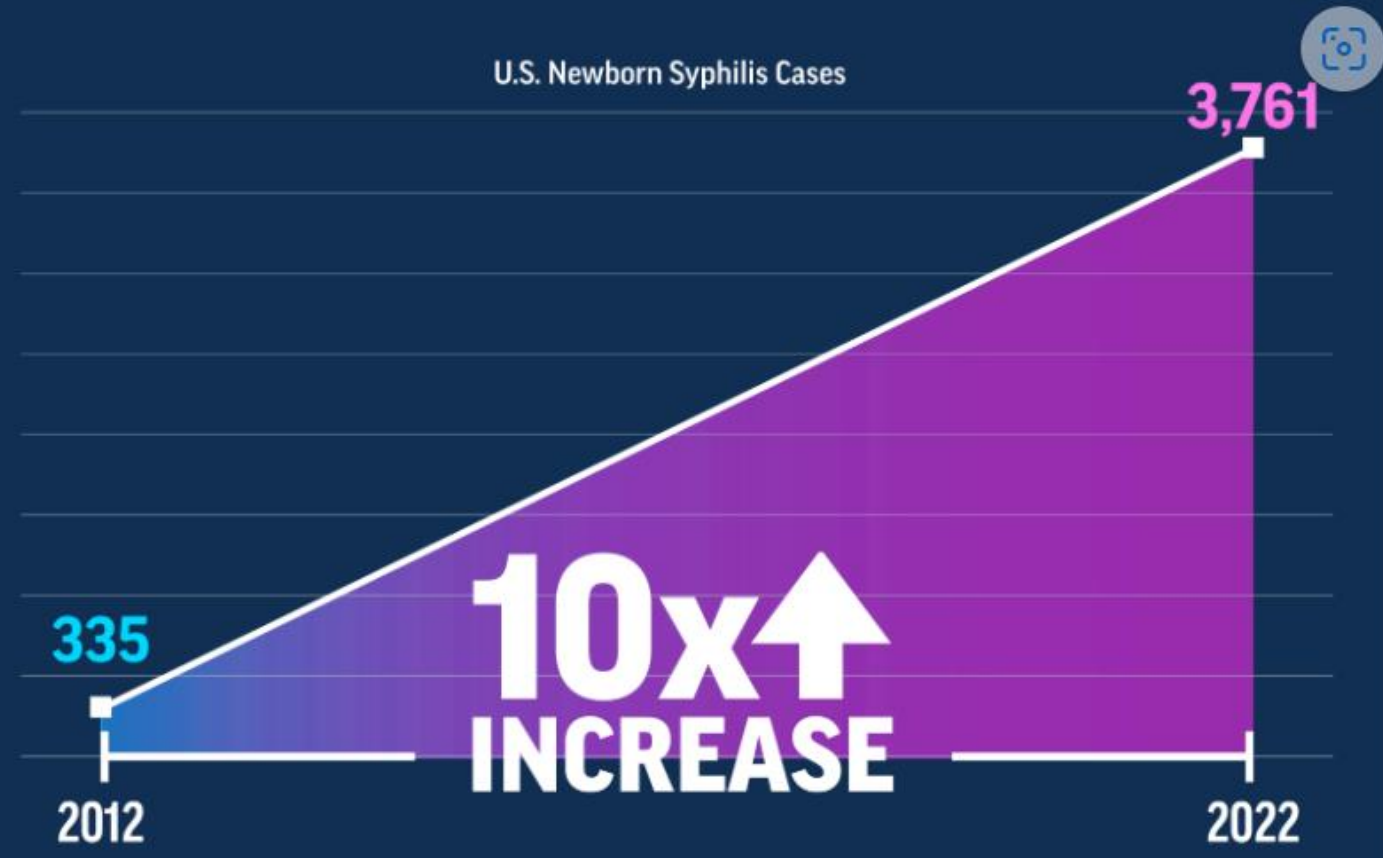
**January 26, 2024**

# Maternal Health Update

## Overview:

- Congenital Syphilis Alert
  - Working with Department of Public Health
- Lifeline for Moms

# U.S. Newborn Syphilis Cases Surge Over 10 Years



**Vital**<sup>CDC</sup>**signs**<sup>TM</sup>  
Source: November 2023 Vital Signs



# Congenital Syphilis

## National

2012-2022

334 babies to 3761 babies

Increase of 1026%

## Kentucky

2012-2022

2 babies to 35 babies

Increase of 1650%

- Key findings, November 2023 CDC *Vital Signs*
- **Almost 9 in 10 cases** of newborn syphilis in 2022 might have been prevented with timely testing and treatment during pregnancy.
  - **More than half** were among people who tested positive for syphilis during pregnancy but did not receive adequate or timely treatment.
  - **Nearly 40 percent** were among mothers who were not in prenatal care

# Congenital Syphilis

- Syphilis is transmitted from the infected pregnant individual to their fetus before birth
- Infected individuals may have minimal to no symptoms of infection
- Screening all pregnant persons 3 times during the pregnancy can identify those in need of treatment
- Treatment is EASY !

# Congenital Syphilis

- Congenital syphilis is preventable!
- If not prevented it can lead to:
  - Still birth
  - Premature birth
  - Blindness
  - Deafness
  - Developmental delay
  - Other lifelong effects



# Congenital Syphilis

- Paid Medicaid claims 2022 and 2023
  - Babies with CS had double the amount in paid claims during the first year of life, as all other babies combined, including babies with congenital heart disease and spinal muscular atrophy.

# Congenital Syphilis

- Health Alert sent out 12/15/2023 asking providers to:
  - **Conduct routine syphilis testing in pregnant individuals at three time points: 1) the first prenatal visit; 2) between 28-32 weeks gestation; and 3) at delivery, regardless of perceived risk and more frequently if indicated.**
  - **Discharge newborns only after the birthing parent's delivery syphilis test results are known. Pregnant people or infants that test positive for syphilis require immediate treatment.**
  - **Report suspected or confirmed syphilis or congenital syphilis cases.**

# Lifeline for Moms

## Perinatal Mental Health Care Support and Consulting Services

Perinatal mental health refers to the mental health of an individual during pregnancy and the postpartum period (up to 1 year after delivery).

During this time, it's common to experience a perinatal mental health or substance use disorder.

# Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals

1 in 8

Experience postpartum depression

1 in 5

Experience a mental health or substance use disorder during pregnancy or in the first year after delivery. These conditions are one of the most common pregnancy complications.

# Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals

20%

Maternal suicide causes 20 percent of postpartum deaths among women with depression. Mental health and substance use disorders are a leading preventable cause of maternal death

75%

of women who screen positive for depression receive no treatment

## 3 to 4 Times

There are major inequities in maternal health outcomes. For example, Black women are three to four times more likely than white women to die during the first postpartum year from all causes.

As it relates to perinatal mental health, despite higher rates of illness, Black women are less likely to receive perinatal mental health care.

# KY Lifeline for Moms

- Department of Public Health HRSA Grant
  - 5-year grant, \$750,000.00 per year
  - First year will be hiring a full-time staff (social worker) and 2 health care professional and starting academic detailing to the front-line providers – Ob/Gyns initially and then expand to Family Medicine and Pediatrics
  - Start in areas of the state where the Medicaid data tells us where the highest use of postpartum emergency department visits are for perinatal mental health issues are AND where there are higher levels of maternal mortality with mental health as a diagnosis.

# KY Lifeline for Moms

- Providers will be able to call a 1-800 number and leave information with administrative staff.
- Staff will get the information to the healthcare professional on call to return the call and get the patient's clinical info.
- A treatment plan will be given to the front-line provider who will then direct the patient's treatment.
- The service will start with 8-5 office hours with the plan to expand as funding allows.



# KY Lifeline for Moms

Increase access to mental health care for pregnant and postpartum individuals

Increase the number of health care providers that can address mental health issues for perinatal individuals

This may ultimately lead to more integration of mental health and physical health into perinatal care settings

Questions?