



October 17, 2022

Interim Commissioner Jennifer Shuford, MD
Texas Department of State Health Services
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

Re: Release of 2022 Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and
Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report

Dear Commissioner Shuford,

Thank you for leading the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) through critical public health issues affecting Texans, and congratulations on your new role. DSHS has invested many years and resources to research and report on the issue of maternal mortality and morbidity in the state of Texas.

We would like to request you reconsider the Department's recent decision to delay publication of findings and recommendations contained in the 2022 Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee. We believe that the data that is available is essential to make informed decisions regarding the future of women's health in Texas. A summary of the report as it exists with the clarification that data is provisional will help elected officials as it considers legislative changes and the next biennial budget. We appreciate the laborious efforts around redaction that are necessary for the review of these cases. However, it is crucial that state leaders can use this data to make evidence-based decisions that support the life, health, and safety of Texas moms.

The 2020 Texas Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee report found that one-third of maternal deaths in Texas occur between 43 days and one year after pregnancy. Additionally, the review found that the vast majority (about 89%) of maternal deaths are preventable.¹ This is the kind of information that informs health policy for our state, as well as the incidence of preeclampsia, hypertension, hemorrhage, anxiety, and gestational diabetes in Texas mothers, to craft and implement critical policy aimed at reducing and preventing future pregnancy related mortalities and morbidities.

Texas has continually exceeded the national average for pregnancy related deaths and maternal morbidities.² A new report from Blue Cross shows pregnancy and childbirth

¹ Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report. (Dec., 2020). Available at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/pdf/DSHS-MMMRC-2020-UPDATED-11282020.pdf>.

² Hoyert DL. Maternal mortality rates in the United States, 2020. NCHS Health E-Stats. 2022. DOI:

<https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:113967>external icon.



complications increased by almost 10% from 2018-2020, regardless of insurance type.³ These results are alarming, making the need for Texas specific data even more vital for decision makers.

We respectfully request a response from the agency regarding this matter. We are encouraged that protecting the lives of Texas mother's is a bipartisan issue, and look forward to continued progress with this legislative priority.

Respectfully,

Evelyn Delgado

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evelyn Delgado".

Chair, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition

³Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Maternal Health. (September 2022). Available at <https://www.bcbs.com/the-health-of-america/reports/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-maternal-health>