

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, over 83,000 babies are born in Washington state each year, and the maternal health and, more specifically, the mental health of women before, during, and after pregnancy is an issue of great concern to women and their families, and is, therefore, of great interest to Washington state; and

WHEREAS, on average 20 percent of new and expectant mothers are affected by perinatal depression and related mood disorders such as anxiety and psychosis, and they may experience associated symptoms, which are often overlooked and heavily stigmatized because new and expectant mothers suffering from a perinatal mood disorder often feel confused, ashamed, and isolated; and

WHEREAS, many at-risk women may not seek help because they are not informed about perinatal depression and related mood disorders as part of their health care, because there is a lack of knowledge and use of screening and assessment tools, and because they are unaware of treatment and community supportive services for perinatal depression and related mood disorders; and

WHEREAS, heightened awareness and increased education among all residents in Washington state regarding the incidence of perinatal depression is critical; perinatal depression and related mood disorders affect all categories of women and teenage girls regardless of their age, race, or income level; perinatal depression can have a profound impact on the family and significantly contribute to adverse developmental and behavioral outcomes and attachment disorders in the young children and infants of affected women; and perinatal depression is highly treatable with therapeutic intervention such as medication, professional therapy and counseling, support groups, and community support services, including crisis hotlines;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 1st day of April, 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee".

Governor Jay Inslee

