



May is Maternal Mental Health Month

One in five California women has symptoms of depression during or after pregnancy, according to the Maternal Infant Health Assessment (MIHA). This translates to about 100,000 women a year. Perinatal depression can affect any woman, regardless of age, income, culture or education.

Though all women are at risk for symptoms of perinatal depression, women who have low incomes or those who have experienced childhood trauma or traumatic stress during pregnancy are at heightened risk of having symptoms of depression.

Depression during pregnancy is likely to lead to depression after the baby is born and is associated with severe risks to the mother and infant. Depression during pregnancy increases the risk of preeclampsia, low birth weight, and premature delivery. It can negatively impact breastfeeding and bonding with the baby. Depression can increase the risk of long term cognitive and emotional development problems in children. And, among mothers, it increases their risk of chronic depression and thoughts of suicide. Though not all women with symptoms of depression will be diagnosed with clinical depression, screening and appropriate care should be provided during prenatal care.

The good news is most women experience full recovery if they get treatment. Getting treatment will strengthen the mom-baby-family bonds, creating a healthier environment for a growing family. Remember, moms do nothing to cause this and there is no shame in asking for help—for mom and baby. If you or someone you know is experiencing perinatal depression, please contact your primary care, OB or mental health provider. For more information on perinatal depression and local resources, please call Nevada County Public Health's Maternal Child Adolescent Health Program at 530-265-1491. You can also get information from Postpartum Support International at 1-800-944-4773 or text: 503-894-9453.

If the situation is potentially life-threatening, call 911. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call Nevada County Behavioral Health Mental Health Crisis line at 530-265-5811 or 888-801-1437, 24 hours a day. The National Suicide Prevention LifelineExternal can be reached at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for free and confidential crisis counseling available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-800-799-4889. Online chatExternal is also available 24/7.