

RESOLUTION NO. 998 -2020, ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS THE DISPARATE IMPACTS OF MATERNAL MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

WHEREAS, Suffolk County has a duty to protect the health and safety of its residents; and

WHEREAS, maternal morbidity and mortality are key indicators of the health of a society; and

WHEREAS, a maternal morbidity is considered any health condition attributed to and/or aggravated by pregnancy and childbirth that has a negative impact on a woman's wellbeing, such as: diabetes, mental illness, anemia, infections, and other perinatal complications; and

WHEREAS, the most severe complications of pregnancy, generally referred to as severe maternal morbidity ("SMM"), affect more than 65,000 women in the U.S. every year and include unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery that result in significant short- or long-term consequences to a woman's health; and

WHEREAS, maternal deaths are devastating events with prolonged effects on partners, children, families, and obstetric health care teams; and

WHEREAS, implicit bias plays a role in the disparate rates of maternal morbidity and mortality of mothers of color immediately prior to and after birth; and

WHEREAS, Suffolk County should address the issues of maternal morbidity and mortality, especially among communities of color, to improve maternal outcomes; and

WHEREAS, a standing task force should be established by the County to study maternal morbidity and mortality rates with a specific focus on women of color and aftercare, to improve the health of mothers and infants in Suffolk County; now, therefore be it

1st RESOLVED, that the Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Task Force ("Task Force") is hereby established to study the rates of and trends in maternal morbidity and mortality in Suffolk County with a focus on women of color and majority minority communities; and be it further

2nd RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall consist of the following sixteen (16) members:

- 1) A representative from the Office of Minority Health, to be appointed by the County Executive;
- 2) A representative of a major hospital system operating in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;

- 3) A representative of Stony Brook University Medical School;
- 4) A representative of Cornell Cooperative Extension;
- 5) A registered nurse or nurse practitioner who focuses on obstetrics and gynecology in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 6) A doctor who practices obstetrics and gynecology in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 7) A midwife who provides services in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 8) A doula who provides services in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 9) A community health worker who provides services in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Department of Health Services;
- 10) A nurse educator who provides services in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 11) A community member from the eastern portion of Suffolk County who has been impacted by maternal morbidity and/or mortality, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 12) A community member from the central portion of Suffolk County who has been impacted by maternal morbidity and/or mortality, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 13) A community member from the western portion of Suffolk County who has been impacted by maternal morbidity and/or mortality, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 14) A representative from a nonprofit organization which works on addressing maternal morbidity and mortality in a majority minority community in Suffolk County, to be appointed by the County Legislature;
- 15) A representative of Sun River Health; and
- 16) A representative from the Suffolk County Board of Health;

and be it further

3rd **RESOLVED**, that the chairperson of the Task Force shall be selected by a majority of the membership of the Task Force; and be it further

4th **RESOLVED**, that that the Task Force shall hold its first meeting no later than thirty (30) days after the oaths of office of all members have been filed, for the purpose of organization, and the selection of a chairperson, vice chairperson, and a secretary; and be it further

5th **RESOLVED**, that the members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation and shall serve at the pleasure of their respective appointing authorities; and be it further

6th **RESOLVED**, that the Task Force shall hold regular meetings, keep a record of all its proceedings, and determine the rules of its own proceedings with special meetings to be called by the chairperson upon his or her own initiative or upon receipt of a written request therefor signed by at least three (3) members of the Task Force. Written notice of the time and place of such special meetings shall be given by the secretary to each member at least four (4) days before the date fixed by the notice for such special meeting; and be it further

7th **RESOLVED**, that the Task Force shall hold no less than two (2) listening sessions annually; and be it further

8th **RESOLVED**, that nine (9) members of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum to transact the business of the Task Force at both regular and special meetings; and be it further

9th **RESOLVED**, that the Task Force shall cooperate with the Legislative Committees of the County Legislature and make available to each Committee's use, upon request, any records, and other data it may accumulate or obtain; and be it further

10th **RESOLVED**, that the Task Force shall issue a written report after a comprehensive study on the challenges facing the County with respect to maternal morbidity and mortality and the disparate impacts on families of color in Suffolk County. The report shall specifically address the maternal morbidity and mortality rates for women of color, the disparate maternal morbidity and mortality rates in majority minority regions of the County versus other areas, and the number of deaths associated with improper aftercare. The report shall provide recommendations for best practices, along with information that would be helpful for doctors, healthcare centers, and hospitals in order to monitor and reduce the rates of maternal morbidity and mortality and its disparate effects in the County; and be it further

11th **RESOLVED**, that the written report shall be submitted to each member of the County Legislature, the Clerk of the Legislature, and the County Executive within one year of the effective date of this resolution for review, consideration and appropriate action, if necessary, by the entire County Legislature. The report shall be presented before the Health Committee of the County Legislature within one month of its submission; and be it further

12th **RESOLVED**, that the Task Force shall update its report every two (2) years with information regarding local trends in maternal morbidity and mortality. The updates to the report shall include information on improvements or setbacks in the maternal morbidity and mortality rates, other contributing factors, and an updated list of recommendations for best practices. The updates to the report shall be presented before the Health Committee of the County Legislature; and be it further

13th **RESOLVED**, that this study shall not be performed by any outside consultant or consulting firm unless explicit approval and authorization for such consultant or consulting firm is granted pursuant to a duly enacted resolution of the County Legislature; and be it further

14th **RESOLVED**, that this Legislature, being the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) lead agency, hereby finds and determines that this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to Section 617.5(c)(26) and (33) of Title 6 of the NEW YORK CODE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS (6 NYCRR) and within the meaning of Section 8-0109(2) of the NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW insofar as these actions constitute routine or continuing administration and management not including new programs or major reordering of priorities that may affect the environment, and the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is hereby directed to circulate any appropriate SEQRA notices of determination of non-applicability or non-significance in accordance with this resolution.

DATED: December 15, 2020

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Steven Bellone
County Executive of Suffolk County

Date: December 21, 2020