



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Senator Brouk Announces Maternal Mental Health Bills Pass Senate, Part of Maternal Health Package

[Samra G. Brouk](#)

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ALBANY, NY - Senator Samra Brouk today announced the passage of two bills in the Senate, part of [a package of legislation introduced earlier this year](#) to address both the maternal mental health needs of New Yorkers who give birth and underdiagnosis and undertreatment in vulnerable, at-risk populations, particularly Black and Brown women. Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee and is a member of the Senate Health committee.

Maternal mental health conditions are the most common complication in pregnancy and childbirth, affecting one in five women. The risks are

[significantly higher](#) for new mothers of color; notably, while Black women are twice as likely to experience many of these conditions, they are half as likely to seek help. [Maternal mental health conditions](#) such as anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar illness and substance use disorders, can create bonding issues between a birthing parent and her baby, contribute to sleep and feeding problems, and cause mental, emotional, developmental and verbal [complications in children](#).

“The most common complications facing birthing people are maternal mental health conditions, which is why I’m proud that the Senate has voted to pass legislation I sponsored to examine the issue, make policy recommendations and improve outcomes,” **said Senator Samra G. Brouk**. “Improving the diagnosis and treatment of maternal mental health and perinatal and postpartum mood and anxiety disorders and the tools we use to screen for them are important steps to confronting the racial inequities in maternal health, and I look forward to the Assembly following the Senate’s lead in protecting the health and well-being of New York’s expecting moms.”

The Senate passed S7752 and S7753.

[Senate Bill 7752](#) directs the Office of Mental Health to create a Maternal Mental Health Workgroup **to study and issue recommendations related to the diagnosis and treatment of maternal mental health** and perinatal and postpartum mood and anxiety disorders. The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Sarah Clark.

Among other tasks, the workgroup shall:

- Identify vulnerable populations and risk factors in the state for maternal mental health disorders that may occur during pregnancy and through the first postpartum year;
- Identify and recommend effective, culturally competent, and accessible prevention screening and identification and treatment strategies, including public education and workplace awareness, provider education and training, and social support services;
- Identify and recommend evidence-based practices for health care providers and public health systems;
- Make recommendations on legislation, policy initiatives, funding requirements and budgetary priorities to address maternal mental health needs in the state.

[Senate Bill 7753](#) requires the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Department of Health **to conduct a study on the inadequacies of existing postpartum depression screening tools** in an effort to address the under-diagnosis and treatment of women in vulnerable, at-risk populations, particularly Black women. The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas.

This study will:

- Examine what additional questions or tools could be implemented to minimize disparities found within the current screening protocols.
- Identify racial disparities within existing protocols and screening measures for postpartum depression and mood disorders
- Identify ways to reduce or eliminate transgender and non-binary and racial and ethnic health care discrimination and disparities that contribute to disparities within current postpartum depression screening protocols.

According to the Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance, the [signs and symptoms](#) of **maternal depression** are: feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless; lacking motivation, concentration, or energy; loss of interest or pleasure in activities; and feelings of anger, guilt, irritability, rage or regret. The signs and symptoms of **maternal anxiety** are: feeling easily stressed, worried or overwhelmed; being hypervigilant with the baby; having scary, intrusive, or racing thoughts; feeling keyed up, on edge, restless or panicked.

If you need help, please 9-1-1 or contact the Postpartum Resource Center of New York – Parents Line, postpartumny.org 1-855-631-0001, 7days a week, 9am to 5pm.

related legislation

[2021-S7752](#)

- Introduced
 - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

[Relates to the establishment of a maternal mental health workgroup](#)

January 10, 2022

Passed Assembly

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[2021-S7753](#)

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 - In Committee Assembly
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 - - Passed Assembly
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[Requires the office of mental health and the department of health to conduct a study on the disparate impacts regarding postpartum depression screening tests](#)

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Aye

Nay