

MATERNAL DEPRESSION DURING THE BIRTHING JOURNEY

AUGUST
2025

- Maternal depression, or perinatal depression, is a mood disorder that occurs during pregnancy and after childbirth.
- Maternal depression during the postpartum period, also known as postpartum depression, can begin at any time in the first year after childbirth.
- Maternal depression is treatable with support. Untreated maternal depression can negatively impact a mom's overall health, family bonding, and infant development.¹

By the Numbers



Of the 80,704 Arkansas mothers who gave birth between Jan. 1, 2019, and June 30, 2022, 2.4% had a behavioral health-related emergency department (ED) visit and 2.6% had an inpatient stay in the year following birth. Most had no follow-up visit within 120 days.⁵

PERCENTAGE OF MOMS WITH NO FOLLOW-UP VISIT

AFTER ED VISIT	AFTER INPATIENT STAY
59%	56%

50% OF U.S. MOTHERS EXPERIENCING POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION GO UNDIAGNOSED.⁶

23% OF PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS IN THE U.S. WERE ATTRIBUTED TO MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS IN 2020.⁷

Depression Screening Recommendations and Policy Changes Timeline

February 2017

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends routine maternal depression screening at 1-, 2-, 4-, and 6-month well-child visits.⁸



June 2023

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends screening for maternal depression and anxiety at the initial prenatal visit, later in pregnancy, and at postpartum visits.¹⁰



January 2024

Arkansas Act 316 of 2023 requires insurers to cover maternal depression screenings within 6 weeks of delivery.¹¹



June 2021

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield coverage policy manual reflects coverage of maternal depression screening at well-child visits.⁹

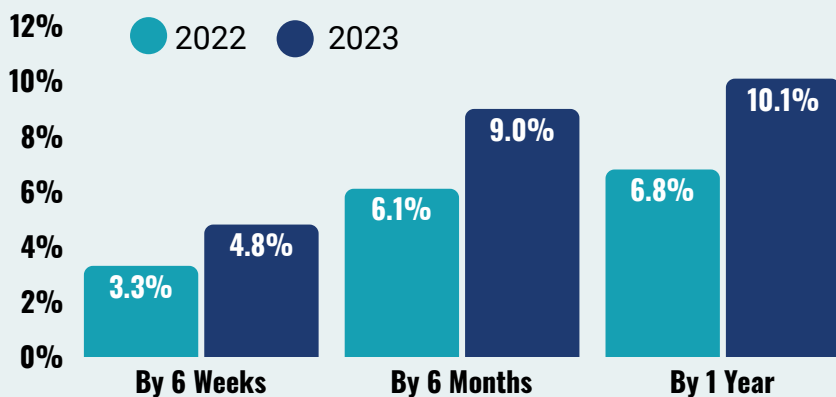


December 2023

Arkansas Medicaid begins covering parental mental health screenings during children's office visits, retroactive to January 1, 2023.^a



Arkansas Mothers With Paid Postpartum Depression Screening by Time Frame



This chart shows the percentages of Arkansas mothers who gave birth in 2022 or 2023 and had paid claims for postpartum depression screening (i.e., the provider who performed the screening was reimbursed by a payer) by 6 weeks, 6 months, and 1 year postpartum. The increases from 2022 to 2023 demonstrate the impact of screening recommendation and policy changes.

Data source: Arkansas Healthcare Transparency Initiative's All-Payer Claims Database.