

# ACCESS TO CARE

# Position Paper

**ISSUE:** Access to healthcare in our country is not guaranteed, varies widely and is affected by geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors.

**BACKGROUND:** The best perinatal health care is comprehensive, risk-appropriate, and culturally sensitive. When appropriately delivered, such care has a direct and measurable impact on birth outcomes. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons many patients face barriers in access to care. These may include lack of health insurance, lack of transportation, lack of education, language barriers, shortages of needed services or specialties in a particular community, among others. Regardless of the reason, NPA believes that comprehensive, risk-appropriate, and culturally sensitive health care should be available to all citizens, taking special care to not exclude traditionally underserved and uninsured populations.

NPA also believes that comprehensive healthcare requires the collaboration of professionals, paraprofessionals, parents, and others with a vested interest in good health outcomes for mothers and babies. Optimal coordination of care, therefore, requires effective communication across specialties, across professions, across disciplines, across families and across cultures.

**STRATEGY:** In order to ensure access to quality perinatal healthcare, NPA supports:

1. Legislation aimed at making healthcare affordable and accessible to every American.
2. Efforts which identify barriers in access to care as well as strategies for surmounting them.
3. Educational programs which promote effective, culturally-proficient communication across perinatal healthcare.
4. Programs which encourage and support medical professionals willing to serve medically underserved populations.

NPA is committed to ongoing collaboration with medical professionals, policy makers, and parents in order to promote access to quality, comprehensive healthcare across our nation.

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