The National Perinatal Association

Perinatal Healthcare Access and Disparities
PANEL:

• Jerry Ballas, MD, MPH, MFM  NPA President
• Aarin Williams, JD  National Advocates for Pregnant Women
• Shante Nixon, BS  Connect2NICU, NPA Board Member
• Viveka Zawisza, MD, OB/GYN  NPA Board Member
Rationale for Position Statement:

Healthcare Access and Disparities is a national issue, but more so for this most vulnerable population - pregnant people and their infants.
“According to the Data”

How we categorize race, ethnicity, social determinants of health (inherited categories... census data... Medicaid data):

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic (Latinx)
- Asian
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
“According to the Data”
In the literature:
• Rural versus Urban
• Substance Users (“addicts”)
• Non-Traditional Families (anything outside of hetero-normative)
• Low Socioeconomic Status (Low SES)
• Health Insurance Coverage
• Disability
“Birth of a Position Statement”

• Public Policy and Advocacy
• The Issue
• Literature Review
• Summary
• Recommendations
So we need to identify barriers. And we want to do it through the lens of social determinates of health.

- Evidence-Based: Review of literature
- 22 professionals and families participated in the development of the position statement.
Medical Perspective

• Dr. Viveka Prakash Zawisza
• Dr. Jerrasimo Ballas
Medical Perspective

Going beyond “do no harm” to actually mitigate and combat sources of harm for vulnerable populations.
Medical Perspective

Consider all of the social determinants of health.
Medical Perspective

Educate providers so that they are aware of and can combat their implicit biases.
Medical Perspective

Know and understand the extent of disparities in health outcomes and what can be done to mitigate them.
Medical Perspective

Advocate for access to prenatal care and family planning.

Address the gaps in care that contribute to our maternal mortality and infant mortality rates.
Parents are equal partners in their childcare journey. Since the parents are equal partners in their child's health care journey, they should be treated with the empathy, dignity, respect, and regard that any provider would entreat another partner in the field.
Parent Perspective

• Shante Nixon, BS

Parents need to be equipped and empowered with the tools and resources to assist in making competent and informed decisions for their children.

Healthcare providers and partners need to engage parents without any preconceived notices and bias - regardless of a parents' nationality, language, race, and socioeconomic status.
Parent Perspective

• Shante Nixon, BS

It is the responsibility of healthcare providers to translate the medical language to laymen terms, so that parents and healthcare providers operate as an effective team during the child healthcare journey, regardless of differences in background.
Legal Perspective

- Aarin M. Williams, JD

Social determinants, but...

Criminalization of Pregnancy?
Legal Perspective

• Aarin M. Williams, JD

We are living in a time of mass incarceration.

“The New Jane Crow”
Legal Perspective

• Aarin M. Williams, JD

First,

Do No Harm
Legal Perspective

• Aarin M. Williams, JD

Beneficence
Non-Maleficence
Justice
Respect
Legal Perspective

• Aarin M. Williams, JD

• Remove judgement and stigma.
• Demand reliable, accurate and well-vetted academic researchers related to drug use and pregnancy.
• Refuse and resist facilitating arrests and child welfare actions against pregnant women and new mothers.
Legal Perspective

• Aarin M. Williams, JD

• Affordable methadone treatment.
• Ensure that prenatal care providers are authorized (“waivered”) to prescribe buprenorphine.
• Ensure that there is no caste system in treatment.
In summary:

• Educate clinicians and providers.
• Include people from vulnerable populations in policy making and research.
• Advocate for comprehensive health care insurance and universal access to care.
• Be offended that we have the highest rates of infant mortality and maternal complications when compare to other wealthy nations.
• Confront the grim fact that we spend the most on healthcare and deliver less than appropriate care.
OUR COMMITMENT:

• NPA will continue its work and advocacy.
• We will collaborate with other organizations.
• We are committed to decreasing perinatal disparities.