

## Call to Action: Maternal Health and Saving Mothers: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association

### Executive Summary

Maternal mortality is alarmingly high at about 700 deaths a year in the United States (US), with cardiovascular disease being the leading cause of pregnancy-related death. As such, the American Heart Association (AHA) has a unique role in advocating for efforts to improve maternal health and enhance access to and delivery of care before, during, and after pregnancy. In alignment with AHA’s mission “to be a relentless force for longer, healthier lives,” this policy statement outlines the inequities that influence disparities in maternal outcomes, current policy approaches to improving maternal health, and suggests additional potentially impactful actions to improve maternal outcomes and ultimately save mothers’ lives.

Several initiatives have shaped the time course of major milestones in advancing maternal and reproductive health equity in the US. There have been significant strides in improving timeliness of data reporting in maternal mortality surveillance and epidemiological programs in maternal and child health, yet more policy reforms are necessary. AHA recommends a multi-pronged approach to help reduce US maternal mortality rates and improve maternal health among individuals experiencing pregnancy including: improving health literacy and public awareness on preconception care; achieving cultural competency and bias reduction among providers; mitigating the impact of social and structural determinants of health; transforming payment and promoting value-based care; modernizing healthcare delivery infrastructure and expanding care-coordination; improving public health infrastructure and digitally enabled healthcare; improving quality reporting of maternal outcomes and health metrics; and expanding access to quality postpartum care.

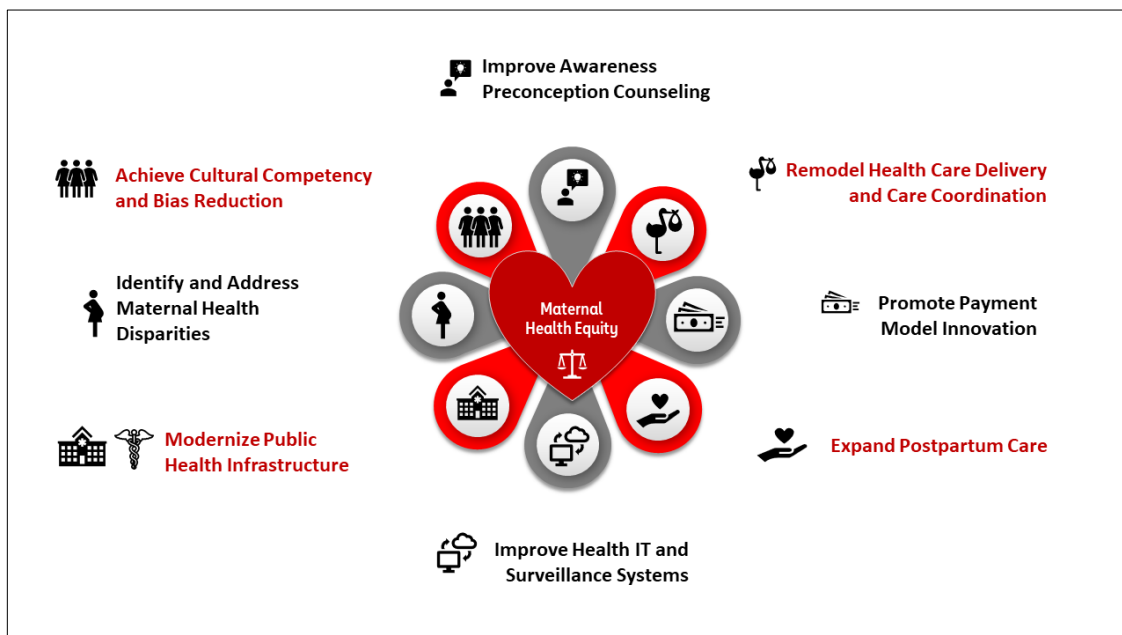


Figure 1: A Multipronged Approach to Achieving Sustainable Maternal Health Equity