

The Role of Abortion Access in Reducing Pregnancy- Related Mortality

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Pregnancy-related mortality is defined as death during a pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy.



Pregnancy-related Mortality Rates

- ◀ Worldwide, the rate of pregnancy-related mortality in 2017 was **211** deaths per **100,000** live births.
- ◀ This rate is far above the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal of **<70** deaths per **100,000** live births by 2030.



75% of pregnancy-related mortality is due to:

Hemorrhage

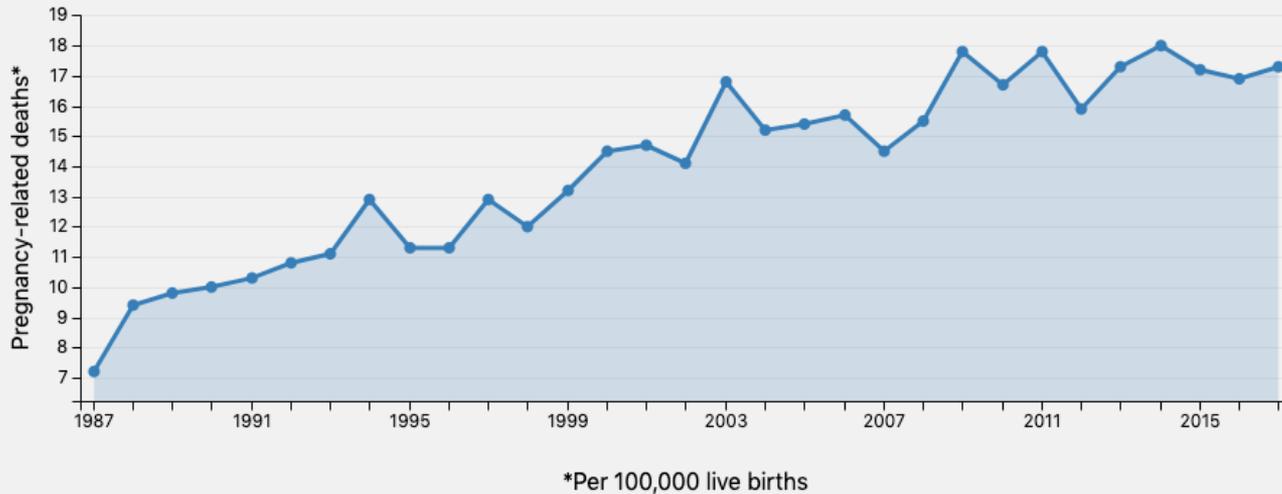
Infection

Hypertension
in pregnancy

Unsafe
abortion

Embolism

Trends in pregnancy-related mortality in the United States: 1987-2017



- ◀ In 2018, pregnancy-related mortality was **17 per 100,000** births
 - ◀ More than double the rate in other high-income countries



Causes of pregnancy-related mortality (US):

Cardiovascular
disease, including
cardiomyopathy

Infection

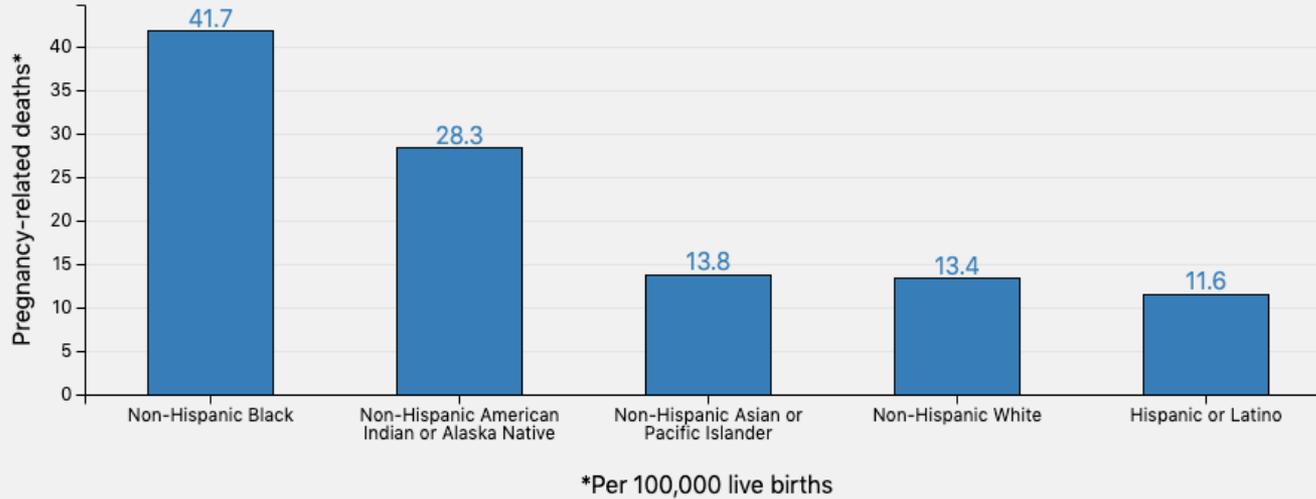
Hemorrhage

Embolism

Hypertension in
pregnancy

Stroke

Pregnancy-Related Mortality Ratio by Race/Ethnicity: 2014-2017



- ▶ Black birthing people die from pregnancy-related causes at a rate **3-4 times** greater than White people.
- ▶ American Indian and Alaska Native birthing people die at a rate **double** that of White people.



Structural and Institutional Racism at the Root

- ◀ Disparities impact how people access:
 - ◀ Quality health care
 - ◀ Healthy food
 - ◀ Safe housing and environments
 - ◀ Fair employment



Increased Legislative Restrictions on Abortion

- ◀ Laws requiring admitting privileges
- ◀ Loss of funding or closure of reproductive health clinics
- ◀ Reducing or removing insurance coverage
- ◀ Limiting the gestational age
- ◀ Many other restrictive laws



Research has shown an inverse relationship between the number of abortion restrictions and reproductive health outcomes, including mortality, as well as with policies that support quality reproductive health.



State-level Abortion Restrictions Impact

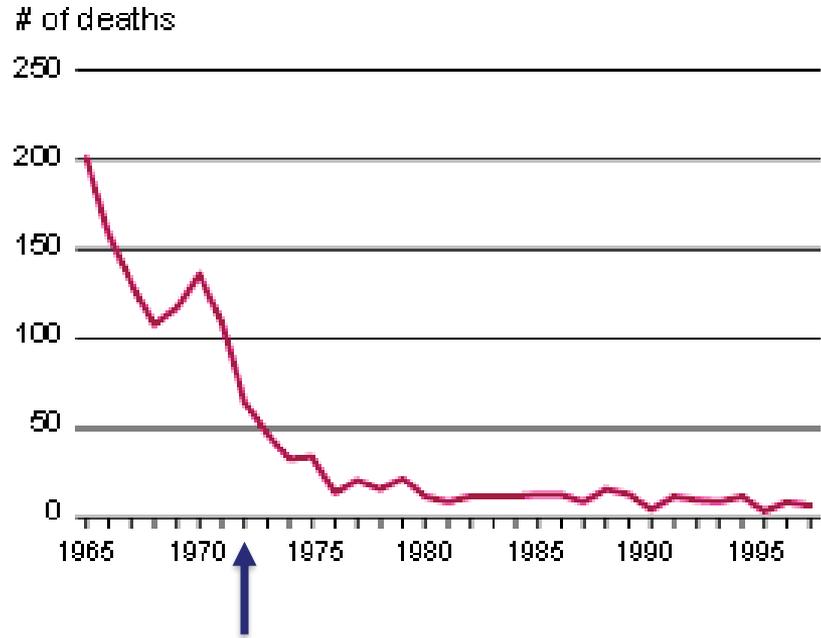
- ◀ Research has shown increases in mortality rates after:
 - ◀ Closure of clinics
 - ◀ **8%** increase
 - ◀ Limiting gestational age
 - ◀ Increase in number of deaths by **6** per **100,000** live births



Impact of Abortion Restrictions

- ◀ Legislative abortion restrictions may also:
 - ◀ Increase stress
 - ◀ Impact mental health
 - ◀ Exacerbate economic inequities, and possibly be associated with greater poverty

When abortion was legalized in 1973, pregnancy-related deaths from unsafe abortion drastically decreased.



Source: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Trends in Abortion in the United States, 1973-2000, January 2003.





Self-Managed Abortion

- ◀ Clinically safe when aligned with best practice recommendations
- ◀ Carries risks of criminalization and stigmatization
- ◀ Disproportionately affects:
 - ◀ those already marginalized by society
 - ◀ those experiencing greater restrictions on their right to an abortion



Conclusion

- ◀ Comprehensive efforts are needed to reduce pregnancy-related mortality.
- ◀ Unburdened, equitable, and just access to safe, high-quality abortion care is a critical piece of these efforts.