

Recommendations for Medical Providers

Postpartum depression, if left untreated, increases the chances of suicide risk. According to the IL Department of Public Health, “Only 3 in 5 women are diagnosed with postpartum depression, and only 1 in 5 receive treatment.”

Undiagnosed and Untreated Postpartum Depression can Escalate and Become Life-Threatening

In a 2022 study, suicide ideation surged in Black pregnant people. “While diagnoses of depression also increased among Black women in the study population, a troubling gap between these diagnosis rates was found that suggested many Black women may go undiagnosed and untreated until their mental health becomes a life-threatening crisis,”



Recommendations

- Provide more community-level education and support to families before having a baby and upon hospital discharge.
- Share mental health resources with those who just had a baby during the three to 6-week postpartum appointment.
- *Offer mental health treatment in the community by using the [Now Pow Database](#) to access community resources.
- Provide estimated wait times for individuals identified as needing mental health support.
- Link patients with services in the community right away. Please note that longer wait times lead to barriers to accessing care.
- Work with the family to identify a safe person if the need arises for them to seek help.

- Ensure that mental health services are covered by their medical insurance before providing listings for postpartum people and their safe person so that it won't be a deterrent to reaching out for care.
- If the postpartum patient has substance abuse issues, they receive information differently. They prefer a 1:1 point person who isn't a social worker. It can be a nurse that links them to care and information.
- *Now Pow – This is a community resource directory to search for community-based resources for all of Illinois, including mental health and transportation to scheduled appointments. It should only be used by medical providers to give recommendations. This database is not recommended for patient use.

