



Spencer J. Cox

Governor
Declaration

Whereas, maternal mental health, which includes postpartum depression and pregnancy related anxiety, continues to be a serious public health issue in Utah;

Whereas, the social isolation and increased fears caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened an already difficult time for Utah mothers;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety encompass a range of symptoms and mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and, in extreme cases, psychosis;

Whereas, 15% of all Utah mothers, and 40% of high-risk mothers, experience maternal depression and anxiety;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety is the leading complication of childbirth, with incidence rates higher than preterm births, low birth weight babies, and gestational diabetes;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety affect a woman's ability to care for herself and engage in healthy parenting behaviors;

Whereas, when a mother experiences maternal depression and anxiety, it affects family well-being and stability;

Whereas, maternal depression and anxiety affects parent-child bonding, increases family conflict, lowers rates of breastfeeding, and can lead to less safe home environments for children;

Whereas, despite the prevalence and risks, there is a lack of awareness and acceptance among the public and providers, and many mothers feel reluctant to report symptoms or concerns;

Whereas, just when a mother expects to be maximally happy with the birth of her child, maternal depression and anxiety can rob her of her happiness and isolate her in baseless shame and stigma; and,

Whereas, there are evidence-based, cost-effective screening, detection, and treatment options to lessen the suffering of mothers, but which are not yet available to all mothers in Utah;

Now, Therefore, I, Spencer J. Cox, governor of the great State of Utah, do hereby declare February 2021, as

Utah Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month

Spencer J. Cox
Governor