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Rep. Adams: "More than 38,000 Pregnant Women" Diagnosed with COVID-19

Alma Adams Press [sam.spencer@mail.house.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 9:45 AM

To: [Steve Johnston](#)

Rep. Adams: "More than 38,000 Pregnant Women" Diagnosed with COVID-19

Rep. Adams' speech on the House floor addressed the maternal health crisis for communities of color during COVID-19

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Last night, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)** addressed the crisis posed by COVID-19 for pregnant women and communities of color on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

[Video of the remarks is available here.](#)

"This month, a CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report found that pregnant women are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19," **said Adams**. "Since January 22, more than 38,000 pregnant women have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the U.S, of which 51 have died. The study found that pregnant women are more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), receive invasive ventilation, and are at increased risk of death compared to nonpregnant women."

[A link to the CDC report is available here.](#)

Adams' full remarks as prepared for delivery are below:

Madam Speaker – I rise today as the Founder and Co-Chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.

And I want to take this time to speak briefly about the impact of COVID-19 on the Black community, communities of color, and pregnant women.

For the past 8 months, our country has been battling this incredibly deadly virus.

It's a national public health crisis unlike any we've ever experienced.

And it has highlighted the existing racial health disparities our communities were already facing.

The data does not lie.

We know that people of color are experiencing significantly higher rates of infections and deaths compared to White individuals.

Black people are more than twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as White people.

And, the mortality rate for Native Americans is nearly two times that of White persons.

Researchers have also found that Black and Hispanic people are nearly three times as likely to contract COVID-19, and nearly two times as likely to die from COVID-19.

This month, a CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report found that pregnant women are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Since January 22, more than 38,000 pregnant women have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the U.S, of which 51 have died.

The study found that pregnant women are more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), receive invasive ventilation, and are at increased risk of death compared to nonpregnant women.

But much remains unknown.

What we do know is that before the pandemic, Black and Brown mothers were already dying at alarming and unacceptable rates.

In particular, Black women from all walks of life were three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women.

According to CDC data, Latina women account for nearly 50 percent of COVID-19 cases among pregnant women.

These numbers indicate the devastating effects of the pandemic on the minority community.

A recent study also showed that Black and Latina women in Philadelphia who are pregnant were five times more likely to be exposed to the new coronavirus than white pregnant women.

Physicians in the Washington, D.C., area said that, anecdotally, they are also seeing similar patterns, according to an August report in the Washington Post.

As I have said since the start of the pandemic, we are facing a crisis within a crisis.

That's why I have been working closely with healthcare providers, stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan for eliminating these racial health disparities, especially during the pandemic.

- *We must improve access to screening and treatment for women at risk for preterm birth;*
- *Ensure all women have access to high quality maternity care, no matter where they live;*
- *And provide access to midwives or doulas that can advocate for families' needs throughout pregnancy, labor, and delivery.*

This summer, I introduced the COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act to provide grants for hospitals and healthcare providers for implicit bias training, particularly in light of COVID-19.

We all have unconscious bias and it's important for our healthcare providers to be more aware of those issues as they are providing care to patients during the pandemic.

We need to invest in programs that help families meet their basic needs—including nutrition assistance, housing assistance, and other social supports.

Last, but certainly not least, we must improve the quality of the data being collected and ensure diversity among stakeholders that serve on mortality review committees.

If we don't stand together to address these inequities, Black and Brown mothers, our families & friends, and our communities will continue to suffer.

I hope this Congress will stand together to ensure our communities, our mothers and our babies have the resources they need – not only to survive this pandemic, but to thrive and truly build back stronger.

Thank you Madam Speaker – I yield back the balance of my time.

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