



Most are unaware that **Postpartum Depression is the #1 complication of a pregnancy**. It is more prevalent than Gestational Diabetes and Pre-Eclampsia combined. And tragically, suicide increases 44% in the postpartum year, making it the **leading cause of maternal mortality**, above all other pregnancy or birth complications, yet it is not routinely screened for by maternal health care providers.

Approximately 20% of mothers and 10% of Fathers will experience postpartum depression in the first year after their baby is born. These numbers increase dramatically even more in high risk populations. One such population are mothers of low socio-economic status receiving Medicaid. Data shows amongst these mothers, the rates of postpartum depression reach epidemic proportions of 47-57%.

Postpartum depression is not just harmful to the parents experiencing the illness, but also to their babies, as they experience this illness through their mothers. Research on infants of mothers with **UNTREATED** postpartum depression show detrimental effects such as pre-term birth, cognitive deficits, neuroendocrine abnormalities, and increased rates of depression, anxiety, and behavior problems themselves as children and adults.

When maternal depression is left untreated, the costs to society are huge, and the stakes are high as it destructively ripples through an entire generation of children. A generation of children impacted by their mother's postpartum depression strains not only the family system, but also our education system, our juvenile justice system, and later, our prison systems to name a few. All this could be prevented with early detection and treatment of the mother's postpartum depression.

Treating maternal depression addresses the "Zero" in Zero to Three programming approaches. The very small intervention of screening ALL mothers for postpartum depression early in the start of their baby's life, will improve not only the parent's chances to enjoy their baby's first year, but moreover for that baby to enjoy their entire lifetime. Please help support the "Bringing Postpartum Depression Out of the Shadows Act" of 2015 [H.R. 3235].