

Governor Phil Murphy

# Statement by First Lady Tammy Murphy on Recent C-Section Disparity Study

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**TRENTON** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today released the following statement in response to a [newly published academic study](https://www.nber.org/papers/w32891) (<https://www.nber.org/papers/w32891>), revealing broad racial differences in delivery methods and C-sections between Black mothers and white mothers in New Jersey. The study examined nearly one million births spanning 68 hospitals across the state between 2008 and 2017.

“I am deeply grateful for this research which confirms exactly what we found when we first came to Trenton in 2018: horrific maternal mortality rates alongside persistent racial disparities dictating outcomes. Over the last six plus years, we have made tremendous progress in our efforts to improve New Jersey’s maternal and infant health outcomes through Nurture NJ. We have ended Medicaid reimbursement of early elective C-sections, brought transparency through the Report Card of Hospital Maternity Care, expanded Medicaid coverage for a full year postpartum, became the third state to ensure Medicaid coverage for doula care and the first state to ensure community based doula training, established the first-of-its-kind Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority, shared-decision making, mandated implicit bias training and more. However, we know that our work to tackle persistent racial disparities is far from over.

“The findings in this study are wholly unacceptable and deeply disturbing, underscoring how vital the work of Nurture NJ has been over the past nearly seven years. We have long known that Black mothers are more likely to undergo unscheduled C-sections compared to white mothers, but this study confirms the historical, large-scale statistical racial disparities in delivery methods, without a correlation to medical risk. This research is critical to supporting the ongoing development of new initiatives that will continue to make a difference for families in New Jersey. We are thankful to the researchers for shining a light on the disparities we are working to eliminate. Racial biases and financial incentives should never drive medical decision-making.

“Unnecessary C-sections put women at a much higher risk for long-term medical complications. The availability of this data is critical to setting an accurate benchmark through which we can evaluate our efforts from the start of the administration and achieving our goal to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable state to deliver and raise a baby. Together with thousands of Nurture NJ partners, I look forward to continuing this important work to ensure all mothers and babies can benefit from a healthy start, regardless of race.”

Governor Phil Murphy

  
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Office of Governor PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000

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