

2023 Maternal Child Health Advocate of the Year

NYSPA President Luanne Brown presents Governor Kathy Hochul with NYSPA's 2023 Maternal Child Health Advocate Award.

NYSPA is proud to recognize Governor Hochul for all she has done to protect and work to ensure women's health. She has been a tireless advocate for women's health and ensuring women's right to reproductive health services which has placed NY as a lead state for assuring women have access to comprehensive and affordable reproductive health care services. The Governor has done so much which truly validates this recognition.



In 2022, she signed legislation (S.7628/A.8536 that adds an additional appointed member to the Public Health and Health Planning Council as a representative of women's health service providers. This ensures that public health decisions involving women's health or facilities specializing in the care of women will be advised by those with appropriate expertise. Many of the members of the PHHPC are experts in various public health fields, such as nursing homes, behavioral health, and insurance companies, but currently no members of the PHHPC are required to have expertise in women's health. Because this council is responsible for amending the Sanitary Code, issuing recommendations to the Commissioner of Health, and reviewing applications for health care facilities, appointing an additional member with this expertise will provide important input to public health decisions conducted by the PHHPC.

After the Dobbs decision in June 2022, Governor Hochul created a \$35 million investment fund for abortion care and worked with the legislature to pass 6 new laws to protect and support providers. This includes [a nation-leading \\$25 million dollar Abortion Provider Support Fund](#), to expand capacity and ensure access for patients seeking abortion care in New York, as well as \$10 million for reproductive healthcare centers to access security grants to help ensure the safety of the providers performing this vital care. In July, 2022, she supported the resolution to enshrine equal rights into the New York State Constitution, which will solidify the right to abortion access in New York State. When enacted, the amendment will add ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy to existing protections that currently cover discrimination based on race, color, religion or creed. The Governor's commitment:

"As the fundamental right to abortion is in jeopardy at the Supreme Court, it is more important than ever before that we take steps here in New York to ensure equitable access to women's reproductive health," We have seen the impact of powerful institutions lacking the expertise and empathy necessary to set policy around women's health, and it has led to massive health disparities in our public health system along gender and racial lines. This will be an important step forward to improve the health of women in New York, bringing more attention to the difficulties and unique health care issues that women face every day, and by adding someone with experience in this crucial and undervalued field to the Public Health and Health Planning Council, we will bring better health equity to all New Yorkers."

The bill signing is one of a series of measures the Governor has taken to protect and strengthen access to reproductive healthcare in New York. The Enacted Budget codified a requirement that all insurance plans cover abortion services and expanded the Family Planning Grant program, which supports community reproductive health providers across the state. The budget also included crucial measures to reduce racial disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity, including an expansion of postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one-year postpartum for all individuals regardless of immigration status and improved access to prenatal and postpartum services, including expanded nutrition services, services by Licensed Clinical Social Workers, peer counseling, and patient navigation services.

NYSPA celebrates and truly appreciates Governor Hochul for all she has done to ensure access to care and help improve maternal and infant health for families in NYS.