



Legislation Text

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Calling upon the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services and its contracted service providers to collect pregnancy status data at intake.

WHEREAS, Because people facing housing instability or homelessness face greater barriers to health care than the housing-secure, access to stable housing has been identified as one of the most important predictors of health; and

WHEREAS, During pregnancy, a time when access to affordable, high-quality health care is crucial, people who are both pregnant and experiencing homelessness face barriers such as lack of reliable transportation and discrimination from some providers, which, for some, bar them from accessing care altogether; and

WHEREAS, A number of studies show the specific impacts of homelessness on the health of pregnant people and their children before and after birth; among these are a decreased likelihood of prenatal visits, breastfeeding, and well-baby checkups, as well as increased likelihood of complications like high blood pressure, anemia, nausea, hemorrhage, low birthweight, and longer hospital stays which are more likely to require intensive care; and

WHEREAS, Disparities in who experiences homelessness exacerbate the already large maternal and infant health inequities that plague Black and brown families, and the stress and health risk of living in substandard conditions combine to produce worse health outcomes for both pregnant people and their children; and

WHEREAS, At City-funded homeless intake centers, initial assessments include family makeup, and minor children who accompany their guardians can qualify for additional assistance, including medical services, mental health support, rapid re-housing, and children and youth services; and

WHEREAS, Unsheltered pregnant people and their unborn children also have special needs and are at greater risk for negative health outcomes than their non-pregnant counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate care and support should be provided to all adults and children entering the system, including those children being carried to term; and

WHEREAS, The shelter intake process should include questions about pregnancy, and pregnant people entering the system should be flagged for additional assistance and support, in a way that is similar to how adults with minor children are categorized; and

WHEREAS, Collecting this data would allow the Office of Homeless Services and its providers to better direct finite resources to those who need them most, make warm handoffs to appropriate partner providers when necessary, and build a deeper understanding of how to narrow disparities in housing, maternal health, and other determinants and outcomes relating to life and health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby call upon the City of

Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services and its contracted service providers to collect pregnancy status data at intake.