

# Maternal mortality rates are on the rise, but more accurate estimates are needed

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A new *Birth* analysis has uncovered dramatic increases in the rates of maternal mortality—the death of a mother during pregnancy, childbirth, or post-partum—in Texas in recent years. There was an 87% increase when comparing 2011-2015 data with 2006-2010 data. Some of the increase is likely due to increased overreporting of maternal deaths due to errors in the data collection system, however.

An accompanying commentary discusses the impact of poor reporting of maternal deaths on national and international efforts to prevent [maternal deaths](#). "Simply put, if accurate maternal mortality data are not available, prevention efforts remain scattered and unfocused. . . and more women die," the authors wrote.

"Despite measurement issues, it is clear that the United States maternal mortality rate is considerably higher than in most industrialized countries, and that most of these deaths are preventable," said Dr. Marian MacDorman, lead author of both the study and the commentary. "The problem is in generating the political will to both improve reporting and to improve [health care](#) around the time of birth, to save women's lives."

**More information:** Marian F. MacDorman et al, Trends in Texas maternal mortality by maternal age, race/ethnicity, and cause of death, 2006-2015, *Birth* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/birt.12330](https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12330)

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