

More than 2.2 million women live in maternity care desert status areas

September 23 2020



(HealthDay)—More than 2.2 million women live in areas with severely

limited to no access to maternity care (maternity care desert status), according to a report published Sept. 23 by the March of Dimes.

Researchers updated the [maternity](#) care desert status of all counties presented in the 2018 report based on the most recent data on availability of hospitals, birth centers, [health care providers](#), and [health insurance](#). Key factors related to maternity care access were examined.

According to the report, more than 2.2 million women of childbearing age live in maternity care deserts, which have no hospitals offering obstetric care, no birth centers, and no obstetric providers. Almost 150,000 babies were born to women living in maternity care deserts in 2017. One in three women of childbearing age living in maternity care deserts live in a large metropolitan area or urban setting; maternity care deserts have a higher poverty rate and lower median household income. In addition, 4.8 million women of childbearing age live in counties with limited access to [maternity care](#); limited-access counties can be identified by three factors: access to obstetric care, obstetric providers, and insurance.

"We must work to address the systemic health disparities that exist in our nation and find real solutions for these seven million [women](#) living without full access," Stacey D. Stewart, president and chief executive officer of March of Dimes said in a statement.

The report was supported by RB and their Enfa portfolio of brands.

More information: [More Information](#)

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Citation: More than 2.2 million women live in maternity care desert status areas (2020,

September 23) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-million-women-maternity-status-areas.html>

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