



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release**

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## **COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES INITIATIVES FUNDED BY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

**MONROE COUNTY, NY** — County Executive Adam Bello today joined Congressman Joe Morelle, members of the Monroe County Legislature, the Department of Public Health (DOPH), multiple healthcare providers, and United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes to announce details for a major investment in programs designed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes throughout Monroe County.

Last October, the County legislature approved \$4.6 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support community-based initiatives that aim to reduce racial and economic disparities in prenatal and postpartum care, expand access to critical services, and strengthen long-term support for mothers and families.

“This funding is about equity, access, and opportunity for every family in Monroe County regardless of zip code or background. By investing in the prenatal and postnatal health of our moms and babies, we are tackling disparities head-on and enabling better outcomes for our community,” **said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello**. “Thank you to Congressman Joe Morelle and Senators Gillibrand and Schumer for making this investment possible and for championing the health and well-being of those who need it most.”

“Every mother deserves access to quality care, and every child deserves a healthy start in life,” **said Congressman Joe Morelle**. “I’m proud to have secured this federal funding to help ensure more mothers and babies in Monroe County get the support they need to thrive. I’m grateful to County Executive Bello for his leadership and continued prioritization of transformative projects like this one, and I look forward to our continued work together.”

“Bringing a child into the world should be a safe, joyous, and celebratory occasion for every parent,” **said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. “Far too many mothers in Monroe County face systemic health disparities and financial instability related to their pregnancies. I’m proud to have secured this funding through the American Rescue Plan Act to support targeted community outreach programming that will help ensure that Monroe County families have access to the resources that they need to thrive. By

financing preventative research into maternal and infant mortality, expanding pre- and post-natal services, and strengthening long-term community-based support for low-income mothers, we're creating a stronger, safer, and healthier community for all New Yorkers. I commend County Executive Adam Bello and the Monroe County Legislature for their efforts to invest in the health of mothers and children across the county."

"Too many mothers and babies in Monroe County still face unacceptable disparities in care and health outcomes, especially in underserved communities," **said Senator Schumer**. "That is why I fought to deliver funding through the *American Rescue Plan* so local leaders could invest in proven, community-based programs that expand access to prenatal and postpartum care, reduce disparities, and help give every child a healthier start in life. I commend County Executive Bello for his leadership in using ARPA funding to make strategic, community-driven investments that expand access to care, strengthen support for mothers and babies, and help close longstanding gaps in health outcomes across Monroe County. This \$4.6 million investment will strengthen support for families across Monroe County and help build a healthier, more equitable future for mothers and babies alike."

"Monroe County continues to face the highest Black maternal mortality rates in New York State, at roughly 51 percent. That reality is deeply concerning and demands action," **said Legislature President Yversha Román**. "These healthcare investments place a critical emphasis on prenatal and postpartum care, helping address our current healthcare crisis and ensuring every mother can navigate this journey into parenthood with support, dignity, and access to resources."

"Every mother and every baby in Monroe County deserves the strongest possible start, and that means making sure families can access the care and support they need during pregnancy and after birth," **said Assistant Republican Leader Jackie Smith**. "Investing in maternal health is an investment in healthier families, stronger communities, and better outcomes for the next generation. I am proud to support efforts that expand access to care and help address the disparities that have affected too many mothers and infants in our community."

The investment will support the following programs:

1. **United Way of Greater Rochester's "ROC Family Teleconnects" program**, an established partnership in Monroe County between the University of Rochester/Golisano Children's Hospital, Rochester Regional Health, and the Anthony L. Jordan Health Center that aims to address health inequities and reduce racial disparities by expanding access to care via tele-health and in-person home visiting services. Monroe County families receiving pediatric care at the one of the participating pediatric practices will be contacted by ROC Family Teleconnects team members within 3 weeks of giving birth.
2. **Mt. Hope Family Center's (MHFC) "Building Healthy Communities" program**, an expansion of MHFC's Building Healthy Children program, an evidence-based model

that has been implemented in Monroe County for more than 17 years. It is a free home visiting program that enhances coordination among URM C OBGYN, social workers, pediatricians, NICU services, and UR MHFC to improve community referral pathways, ensuring high-quality care and better access for low-income families and people of color in Monroe County. The program will provide coordinated medical and behavioral treatment specifically for the postpartum period. All Monroe County families giving birth at Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital will be eligible for the program.

3. **URMC Public Health Science Department’s “Reducing Maternal Mortality: Informed Targeted Universal Intervention through the Mothers and Babies Health Survey 3.0” program**, a third version of a successful public survey that has been completed twice prior in Monroe County, most recently in 2018. The survey gathers valuable data and provides insight into how families feed their infants with the goal of increasing breastfeeding durations and rates. All Monroe County families giving birth will receive a survey invitation as part of their birth certificate paperwork.
4. **Equally Balanced Therapy & Wellness PLLC’s Prenatal And Maternal Physical Ease & Relaxation “P.A.M.P.E.R. Mom” program**—a program offering prenatal medical massage during the third trimester of pregnancy to low-income and uninsured Monroe County moms.

“When mothers and fathers-to-be have consistent support during pregnancy and after birth, we see better outcomes for them and their babies, including healthier births, fewer complications and stronger early development,” **said Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Marielena Vélez de Brown**. “These programs help identify concerns early, connect families throughout Monroe County to care and provide ongoing support during a critical time for mothers, fathers and infants. Thank you to Congressman Morelle, and to Sens. Schumer and Gillibrand for securing this vital funding for our community.”

"Being a new mom or dad is one of life’s most meaningful - and most challenging - moments. For decades, our community has asked a simple question: what would it look like if every family in Monroe County had someone in their corner during those first critical months after bringing a baby home? ROC Family Teleconnects is that answer," **said Jaime Saunders, President and CEO of United Way**. "This is a transformational effort - built through deep collaboration with URM C, Rochester Regional, Anthony Jordan, Accountable Health Partners, and United Way, and fueled by Monroe County and ARPA - to strengthen and expand home visitation. It is a bridge to families who have too often been missed, particularly in the critical postpartum period where we know challenges are greatest. By removing barriers and stigma and reaching families who may

not qualify for traditional programs, we are ensuring more parents have the support they need - because when we show up for families early, we build stronger, healthier communities."

"We are deeply grateful to County Executive Bello and Congressman Morelle for their leadership in securing this critical investment and for reinforcing our long-standing partnership with the County. This funding will allow Mt. Hope Family Center to take a universal, public health approach to maternal and infant health, offering high-quality services to thousands of families. With this support, we will also be able to launch a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of this County-wide effort. With data from the evaluation, we hope to demonstrate how continued investment ensures that more mothers, infants, and children have the opportunity to thrive and how our community can emerge safer and healthier," **said Jennie Noll, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mt. Hope Family Center.**

"The ARPA funding and county support will make it possible for our team at the University of Rochester Medical Center to create and administer the Mothers and Babies Health Survey 3.0 to every mother who gives birth in 2026. Maternal morbidity and mortality remain urgent public health concerns for our county and we must continue to work towards healthy births for every mother. Survey responses will help inform effective interventions by providing critical insights. We will also be sharing the new 211 New Families Navigation Tool to help families easily access community resources. Thank you to County Executive Bello and Congressman Morelle for prioritizing maternal and child health, and supporting this important work," **said Theresa Green, PhD, MBA, Associate Professor, University of Rochester Medical Center.**

"Prenatal And Maternal Physical Ease & Relaxation (known as P.A.M.P.E.R.) is dedicated to empowering low-income pregnant women in their third trimester by providing accessible, culturally responsive prenatal massage therapy. Our mission is to reduce pregnancy-related stress and discomfort by promoting maternal wellness, educational resources, and improving birth outcomes through safe, nurturing and trauma-informed bodywork. The ARPA funding will allow us to offer free services to uninsured and underserved women within Monroe County who benefit most for healthcare services but is unable to afford the level of care provided due to income barriers. Through compassionate touch, education and positive interactions, PAMPER fosters comfort and emotional well-being as moms prepare for labor and delivery," **said Equally Balanced Therapy & Wellness Owner Therica Harris.**

This funding aligns with recommendations from the 2021 [Racial and Structural Equity \(RASE\)](#) report, which identified significant inequities in maternal and infant health. According to the RASE report, African American infants in Monroe County are three times more likely to die before the age of one, and Latino infants are twice as likely as white infants to experience the same outcome. The report also says African American mothers are 2.5 times more likely, and Latina mothers two times more likely, than white mothers to give birth to low-weight babies.

To learn more about the programs announced today and additional ones that offer support, visit, [www.211lifeline.org/newfamily](http://www.211lifeline.org/newfamily) or call 211.



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