

# PROTECTING ARIZONA WOMEN'S HEALTH

Right now, Arizona women face threats to their right to reproductive health care and access to quality, affordable care. Rep. Gallego has welcomed two children and seen firsthand the importance of quality maternal health care. But, unfortunately, too many Arizona women don't have access to the care they need. **Arizona needs bold leadership to ensure that every Arizona woman has access to safe, legal abortion, contraception, birth control, and fertility care and is able to see a doctor without fearing the cost of medical bills.**



## Reproductive Health

A woman's right to control her own body has never in recent history been as perilous in Arizona as it is now. For nearly 50 years, Arizona women had a right to safe, legal abortion care because of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling — but in 2022, an ultra-conservative majority on the Supreme Court ripped that fundamental right away. Arizona women now face a terrifying and unclear landscape when it comes to their health care rights. Although a fifteen-week abortion ban is currently the law of the land, **anti-abortion activists are working to enforce an 1864 pre-statehood law that bans abortion without exceptions for rape or incest and could mandate jail time for doctors.**<sup>1</sup>

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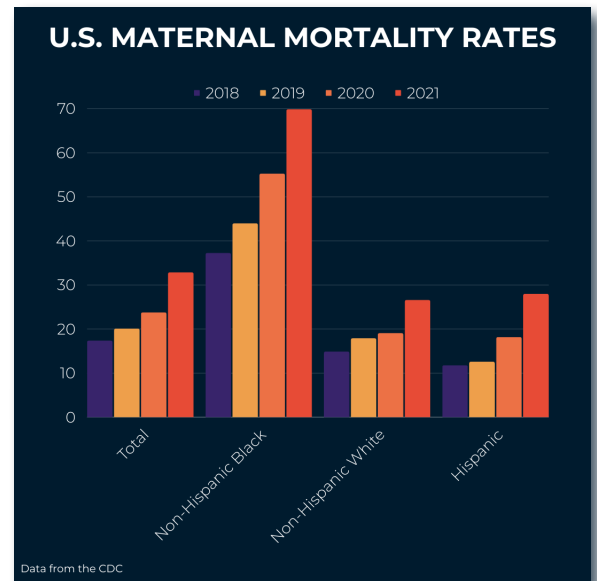


An abortion ban enacted in 1864 is under review in the Arizona Supreme Court

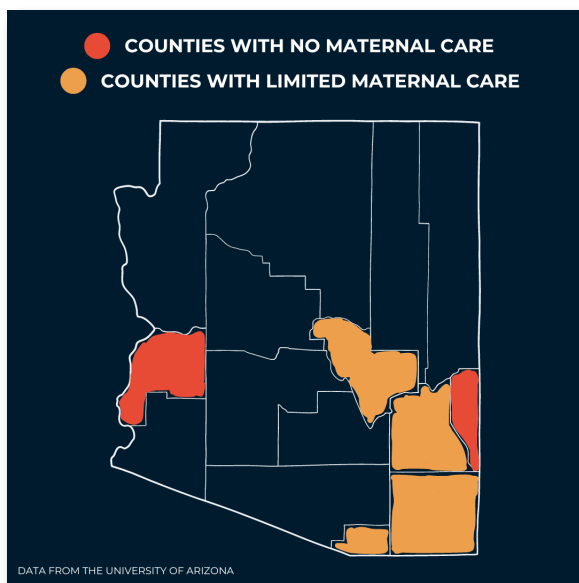
**Rep. Gallego believes that women — not politicians — should be able to make their own reproductive health care choices**, which is why he strongly supports protecting abortion access across America through the *Women's Health Protection Act*. He is a proud cosponsor of the *EACH Act* because every woman should have access to abortion care, not just those who can afford high-quality private insurance, and he is fighting to preserve access to safe, non-invasive abortion medications like Mifepristone. He also supports legislation to guarantee a legal right to contraception and fertility care.

## Maternal Health

Arizona women who choose to have a child face worse health outcomes throughout their lifetimes than those who don't — and at no point is that risk more clear than in the delivery room.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, the national maternal mortality rate was nearly 33 deaths per 100,000 live births – up from 20.1 in 2019.<sup>3</sup> For women of color, it's even worse. **Between 2020 and 2021, the maternal mortality rate jumped 25% for Black women and 44% for Hispanic women<sup>4</sup>.** And yet, health experts report that 4 in 5 maternal deaths are preventable.<sup>5</sup> That is why **Rep. Gallego is fighting for all women to have full maternity health coverage, all the way through pregnancy, childbirth, and the beginning of a child's life.**



To that end, Rep. Gallego fought to pass the *American Rescue Plan Act*, which **expanded Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage in Arizona to 12 months after pregnancy.** Rep. Gallego is also working to get more resources into Arizona's communities, including by increasing the maternal health workforce and investing in community-based initiatives like the **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.**



A primary driver of high maternal mortality rates is a lack of quality doctors. **In Arizona, at least three rural counties have no OB-GYNs or certified nurse-midwives.<sup>6</sup>** To address Arizona's doctor shortage, Ruben supports the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act* **to add 14,000 new doctors across the country.** He's also working to grow the nursing workforce by investing in nursing schools and increasing the amount of time nurses are able to spend directly with patients.

Rep. Gallego is a strong supporter of the **Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act** to improve maternal health outcomes for Latina, Black, and Native women across Arizona. The bill expands food assistance for new mothers, funds community maternal health centers, and grows the maternal health workforce.

## Health Insurance

A primary determinant of a woman's ability to access quality reproductive and maternal health care is her ability to access quality health insurance.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, Arizona children and adults are uninsured at rates higher than the national average. **And Arizonans of color face even greater disparities, with uninsurance rates at 18.5% for Hispanic, 14.5% for Black, and 21.5% for Native Arizonans.**<sup>8</sup> That's why Rep. Gallego has fought tirelessly to ensure Arizonans can get and stay covered. **In the Arizona House, Rep. Gallego led the push to pass Affordable Care Act (ACA) Medicaid expansion**, providing low-income working Arizonans and seniors on a fixed income with access to coverage. More recently, he helped pass the *American Rescue Plan Act* and the *Inflation Reduction Act* to expand and extend ACA premium tax credits, saving 200,000 Arizonans an average of \$830 annually.

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Latinos, los más beneficiados con la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación, según reporte

## Prescription Medication

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'Despair and extreme anger': At roundtable, Rep. Ruben Gallego hears impact of high drug costs

Too often, women — because they often take on the burden of being the primary caregiver — are saddled with higher health care costs, including prescription drugs.<sup>9</sup> Across the board, drug prices have skyrocketed in recent years, sending thousands of Arizonans across the border to Mexico for cheaper prescription medications.<sup>10</sup> **Be-**

**tween July 2021 and July 2022, there were over 1,200 drugs whose prices increased faster than inflation**, despite historic inflation that year — resulting in record profits for pharmaceutical companies and leaving families, and more often than not women, dealing with the impact.<sup>11</sup>

**To hold drug companies accountable for price gouging and cut costs for Arizonans, Rep. Gallego fought to pass the *Inflation Reduction Act*.** The law caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs at \$2,000 per year and insulin costs at \$35 per month for Medicare recipients. **But Rep. Gallego isn't stopping there.** He's introduced the ***Lower Drug Costs for Families Act*** to force drug companies to pay a penalty if they raise prices faster than inflation. Rep. Gallego also introduced legislation to rein in Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), the healthcare middlemen who are raising drug prices to line their own pockets.

## Endnotes

- 1 <https://apnews.com/article/abortion-arizona-doctors-old-law-b8b10a6df203c99ea6fe-51319c533ebe>
- 2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2565801/>
- 3 <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm>
- 4 <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/10/13/pregnant-latinas-face-greater-maternal-health-concerns.html>.
- 5 <https://healthsciences.arizona.edu/news/stories/overcoming-obstacles-improve-maternal-health-care>
- 6 <https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2023/07/12/arizona-pregnancy-deaths-maternal-mortality>
- 7 <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/08/01/maternal-health-care-crisis-0010910> 6
- 8 <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/state-indicator/nonelderly-uninsured-rate-by-raceethnicity/>
- 9 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/prescription-drug-reform-is-a-womens-economic-security-issue/>
- 10 <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/02/11/691467587/americans-seek-cheaper-meds-in-mexico>
- 11 <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/09/30/new-hhs-reports-illustrate-potential-positive-impact-inflation-reduction-act-prescription-drug-prices.html>