

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 43RD LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
1 CHARLES III, 2022

Bill 33

An Act to proclaim Maternal Mental Health Day

Ms B. Karpoche

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading November 3, 2022

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



An Act to proclaim Maternal Mental Health Day

In Ontario, as many as one in five new mothers experience some type of maternal mental illness, such as perinatal mood and anxiety disorder, during pregnancy and in the first 12 months following childbirth. Frequently, maternal mental illness goes unnoticed and untreated, causing negative impacts for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of both mother and child.

Cis-gendered women and trans men who give birth can experience maternal mental illness. Mothers of every culture, age, income level and race can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. However, marginalized populations, such as LGBTQ2S+ people, members of the Indigenous community, the Black community and other racialized communities, adolescents, mothers with histories of substance use, immigrants, refugees, and individuals with disabilities may experience maternal mental illness at higher rates.

Maternal mental illness is impacted and compounded by the social determinants of health such as income, housing, employment, education, early childhood development, perinatal health care, community and social supports and by structural determinants such as family policy, employment policy, income support, social insurance policy and education policy.

Newcomer mothers who are removed from traditional family and cultural support tend to experience higher levels of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Cultural factors have been found to have a strong influence on promoting positive perinatal mental health outcomes.

Maternal mental illness is treatable and the negative impacts can be mitigated with timely access to diagnosis, treatment and support services. However, up to 85 per cent of mothers with maternal mental illnesses go untreated. The stigma of mental illness prevents mothers from seeking assistance and many mothers are not aware they are suffering from a mental illness. Therefore, it is important to heighten awareness of the prevalence of maternal mental illness and the effective and well-researched prevention and treatment options available to mothers.

By proclaiming the first Wednesday in May of each year as Maternal Mental Health Day, the Province of Ontario highlights the importance of maternal mental health with the goal of enhancing the quality of care and improving the mental health of mothers.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Maternal Mental Health Day

1 The first Wednesday of May in each year is proclaimed as Maternal Mental Health Day.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Maternal Mental Health Day Act, 2022*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims the first Wednesday of May in each year as Maternal Mental Health Day.