



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia Launches “Beyond the Blues” Campaign to Raise Awareness of Perinatal and Postpartum Depression

Campaign helps Virginians recognize emotional changes earlier, reduce stigma and connect parents and families to support.

(RICHMOND, Va) — In honor of Maternal Mental Health Month in May, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), announced the launch of *Beyond the Blues*, a statewide public awareness campaign designed to help Virginians better understand perinatal & postpartum depression and maternal mental health.

The General Assembly allocated \$553,200 for the [campaign](#) and development on an online resource hub. It was created to help parents, families, healthcare providers and communities recognize that maternal mental health struggles are common, treatable and often show up in ways people may not expect. Symptoms can include physical aches and pains, feelings such as anxiety, numbness, rage, fear, sadness, or simply “not feeling like themselves.” These experiences can happen before pregnancy, during pregnancy, after birth or long after a baby arrives.

“Maternal mental health determines a parent’s ability to care for their family and themselves,” said **Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marvin B. Figueroa**. “When we support parents through programs like Beyond the Blues, we create more stability for children and help prevent challenges from becoming emergencies.

Seventy-five percent of women affected by postpartum depression and maternal mental health issues do not get the help they need. Recognizing the symptoms can be part of the challenge. The campaign is designed to help make those early signs easier to recognize and talk about. It also emphasizes community responsibility and how partners, family members, friends, faith leaders, healthcare providers, neighbors and local organizations can provide support.

“Support often begins with the people closest to a parent,” said **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Cameron Webb**. “You don’t have to be an expert to help. If you notice something, you can ask, listen without judgment, and help them take that next step.”

“As we all work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health, conversation and connection is key,” said **DBHDS Commissioner Daryl Washington, LCSW**. “Starting that conversation with a friend or loved one experiencing mental health challenges during pregnancy or after birth can make an important difference in their lives and help assure them that they are not alone in this journey.”

Beyond the Blues campaign materials will encourage parents to seek support and equip community networks with plain-language tools for starting conversations. Healthcare providers and community messengers will also be encouraged to use compassionate, nonjudgmental language and offer clear next steps for help. An online resource hub is available to make maternal mental health information more accessible for parents, community partners, local health districts and trusted organizations. Focus areas include:

- Current information on perinatal and postpartum depression and other maternal mental health conditions
- Directing people to Postpartum Support Virginia, which provides a directory of mental health providers specializing in perinatal care and offers care coordination services
- Information on support groups and other state and national resources
- Shareable materials and a Beyond the Blues awareness campaign toolkit for partners
- An opportunity to share your experience with postpartum depression or other mental health issues during pregnancy or the postpartum period

For more information and resources, visit vdh.virginia.gov/beyond-the-blues.

About the Virginia Department of Health

The Virginia Department of Health protects the health and promotes the well-being of all people in Virginia. VDH works with communities, healthcare partners and public health leaders across the Commonwealth to prevent disease, promote healthy environments and ensure access to information and services that support healthier lives.

About the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities or substance-use disorders. DBHDS operates 12 state hospitals and centers and partners with 40 locally run community services boards and thousands of private providers statewide. For more information, please visit www.dbhds.virginia.gov, and find DBHDS on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

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