

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Jim Pillen, Governor

September 1, 2023

The Honorable Jim Pillen
Governor of Nebraska
State Capitol Room 2316
Lincoln, NE 68509

Mr. Brandon Metzler
Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol Room 2028
Lincoln, NE 68509

Subject: Women's Health Initiative Report

Dear Governor Pillen and Mr. Metzler:

In fulfillment of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-707, the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health submits this report describing progress on programs, activities, and educational promotions undertaken by the Women's Health Initiative in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Also included is a status update on women's health in Nebraska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charity Menefee".

Charity Menefee
Director, Division of Public Health

Attachment



Division of Public Health

Women's Health Initiative Report

September 2023

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-707

Women's Health Initiative

The Nebraska Women's Health Initiative was created by the Legislature to improve the health of women in Nebraska by fostering the development of a comprehensive system of coordinated services, policy development, advocacy, and education. The initiative serves as a clearinghouse for information regarding women's health issues; performs strategic planning within DHHS to support the implementation of goals related to women's health outcomes; shares information within DHHS and with outside partners who provide care and services to women; and encourages public and private partners to innovate in their work to address women's health.

Office of Women's Health Activities – FY2022-2023

During this reporting period, The Office of Women's Health Initiative staff:

- Participated in several professional development opportunities related to improving grant management knowledge, strengthening leadership skills, as well as improving office skills.
- Continued to process applications and reimbursement claims for the Elemental Formula Reimbursement Program.
- Continued to collaborate with internal and external partners to promote women's health.
- Participated in a myriad of activities, including:
 - Lead for Title V Priority Area: Cardiovascular Disease including Diabetes, Obesity, and Hypertension
 - Finalized sub-awards for two Tribes of Nebraska (Winnebago and Ponca). The goal of these sub-awards is to improve birth outcomes in Native American communities.
 - Participated in the Sexual Violence Prevention Collaborative quarterly meetings.
 - Participated in several webinars and virtual conferences, including but not limited to the 6th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference, the Tri-Regional Maternal Health Conference, Improving Access to Maternal Health Care in Rural Communities, and the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Summit.
 - Continued to serve on the following maternal health-related committees: Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Steering Committee, Title V Steering Committee, I Be Black Girl Maternal Health Coalition, Maternal Infant Mortality Focus Collaboration Team, and the Health Equity Collective Impact Group.
- Provided administrative assistance to two Governor-appointed Councils:
 - Women's Health Advisory Council (WHAC)
 - Palliative Care and Quality of Life Council
- Since our last report, staff in the Lifespan Health Services Unit completed the FY22 (October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022) Title V progress report and the action plan for FY24 (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024). Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant is a program that seeks to improve the health of all mothers and children, including children with special health care needs (CSHCN). Title V legislation requires Nebraska to conduct a statewide, comprehensive needs assessment every five years. The state is also required to submit an Annual Application and Report every July 15 to receive Title V MCH Block Grant funding. The FY2023 Application/FY2021 Annual Report can be assessed here: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Title-V.aspx>

Women’s Health Advisory Council

- The purpose of the Council shall be to advise and serve as a resource for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in carrying out its duties as enacted by the Legislature in the Women’s Health Initiative (Neb Rev. Stat. § 71-702).
- 2022-2023 WHAC Members:

Rachel Hays, MBA Chair

Ashley Carroll, MPH Co-Chair

Ebony Byars

Sara Morgan, MS

Rachel Thompson, MSN, RN, CRRN

Kathryn Fiandt, PhD

Samantha Kenning, MSN

Bethany Arnold, OTD

Celeste Illian, MPH

Gary Anthone, MD

Amber Grob, PMHNP

Victoria Vinton, MSN

Julie Tabor, JD

Tami DeBonis, MSN

Erica Anderson, BS, MS, PLMHP

- During this reporting period, the Council met quarterly. Members also presented at the Association of Women’s Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurse Conference in September.
- In addition the Council reviewed Legislative Bills and chose six of those to support during the 2023 Legislative Session:
 - LB35 - To extend the applicability of criteria for eligibility for assistance.
 - LB57 - To adopt the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act.
 - LB84 - To change the gross income eligibility limit.
 - LB115 - To adopt the Family Home Visitation Act.
 - LB145 -To change provisions relating to coverage for screening mammography and breast examinations.
 - LB248 - To prohibit discrimination based upon lawful source of income or compliance with public assistance requirements and to create the Landlord Guarantee Program.

Palliative Care and Quality of Life Council

- The purpose of the Council shall be to consult with and advise the Department of Health and Human Services on matters relating to palliative care initiatives (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-4504).
- 2022-23 Members:

Todd Sauer, Chair

Stacie Sinclair, Vice Chair

Marcia Cederdahl

Brenda Kastens

Andrew Macfayden

Julie Masters

Angela Mortensen

Sabrina Schalley

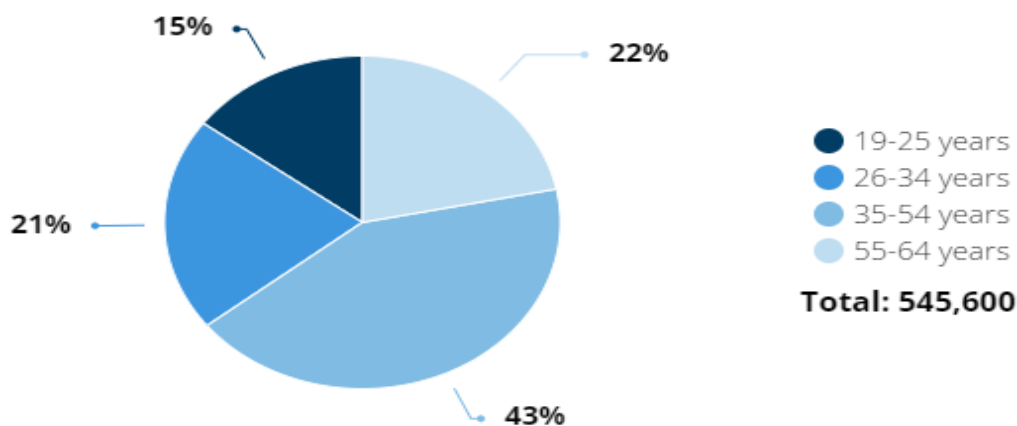
Theresa Jizba

- During this period, the Council presented on palliative care to various groups. They also continued to educate about palliative care by sharing materials via the Council’s webpage: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/About-Palliative-Care.aspx>
- In September 2022, the Council invited then-Senator Mark Kolterman, sponsor of the legislation that created the Council, to the meeting. Then-Senator Kolterman shared his story and expressed his appreciation for the Council’s work, including their efforts to raise awareness of palliative care.
- The Council was instrumental in helping to create a clear definition of palliative care for Nebraska that Senator Armendariz introduced as LB345 on February 3, 2023, was incorporated into the Health and Human Services Committee priority bill LB227 and was signed into law on June 6, 2023.

Nebraska Women’s Health Profile

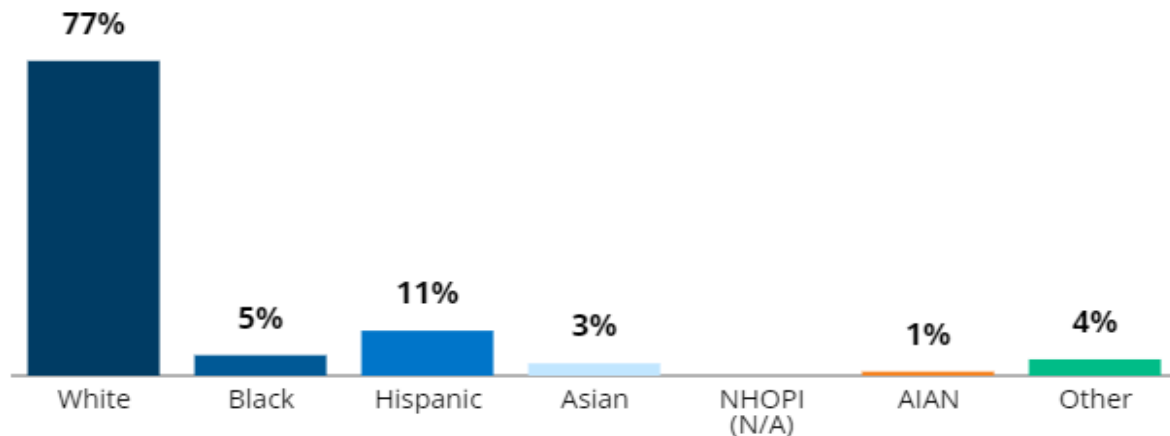
The following charts share the most recently available data and are Nebraska-specific from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), State Health Facts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Vital Statistics Reports include a selection of the most recent data available on demographics, doctor’s visits, health insurance coverage, and birth rates. This information can be found at <https://www.kff.org/interactive/womens-health-profiles/?activeState=Nebraska&activeCategory=demographics>

Distribution of Women Ages 19 to 64, by Age Group, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

Distribution of Women Ages 18-64, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska

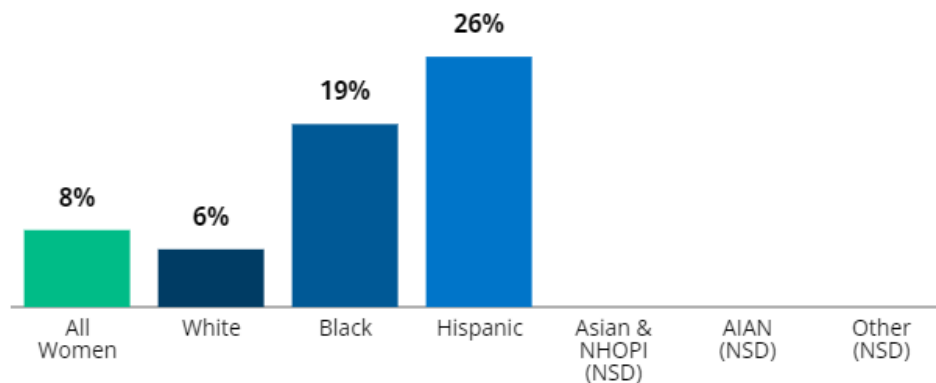


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

Access and Utilization of Care

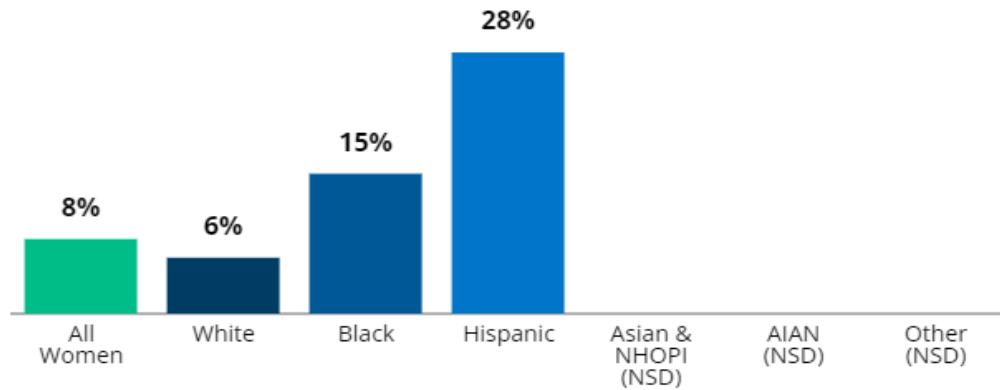
Access to health care refers to the ease with which an individual can obtain needed medical services. Utilization of care is the use of services for preventing and treating health problems, monitoring health and well-being, or obtaining information about health status and prognosis.

Share of Women Ages 18 and Older Who Did Not See A Doctor in the Prior 12 Months Due to Cost, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

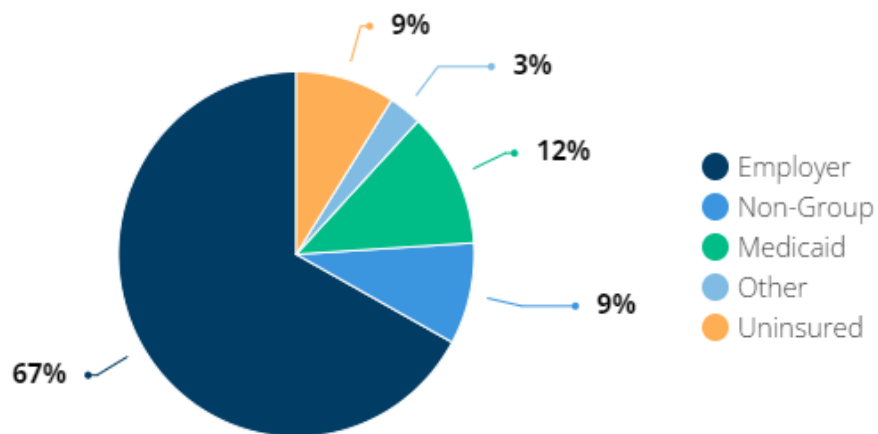
Share of Women Ages 18 and Older Who Do Not Have A Personal Doctor or Health Care Provider, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

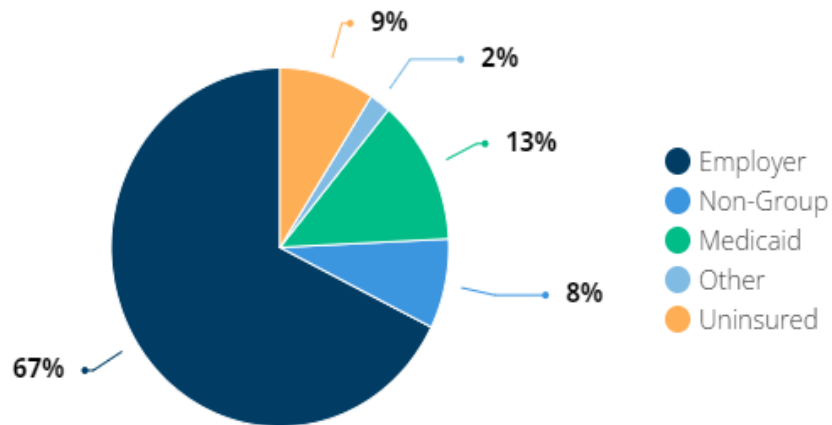
Health Insurance Coverage

Health Insurance Coverage of Women Ages 19-64, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

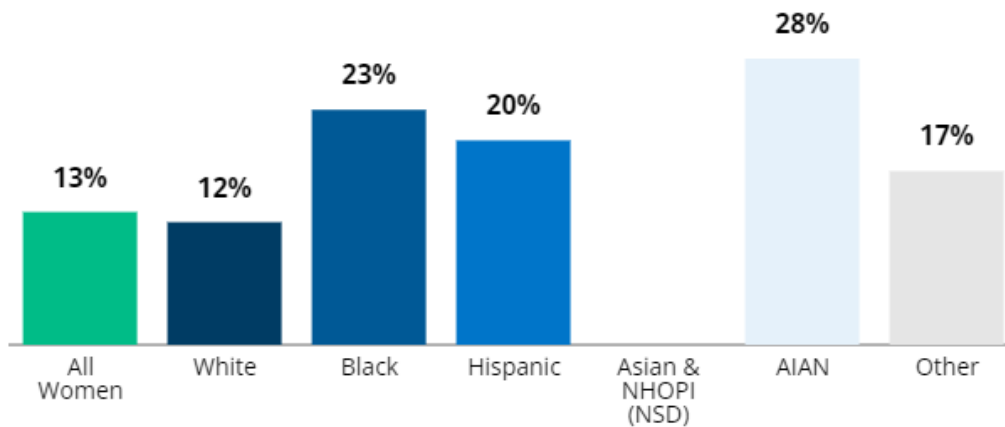
Health Insurance Coverage of Women Ages 15-49, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

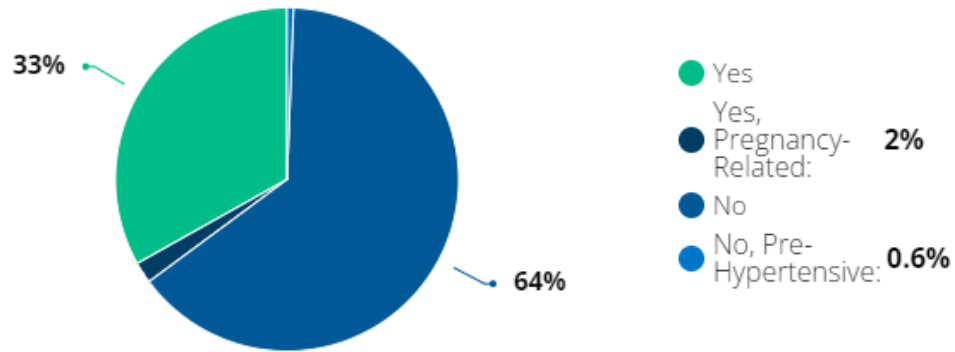
Health Status of Women in Nebraska

Women Ages 18 and Older Reporting Fair or Poor Health Status, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska



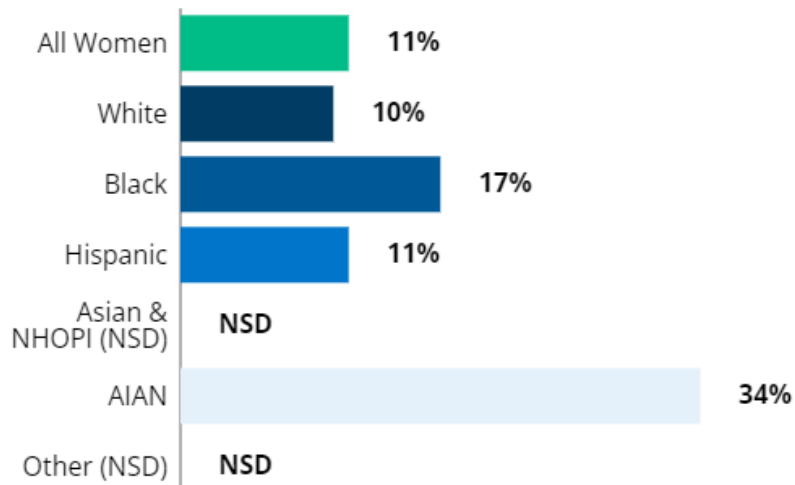
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

Women Who Report Ever Being Told by a Doctor that They Have Hypertension, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

Women Who Report Ever Being Told by a Doctor that They Have Diabetes, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

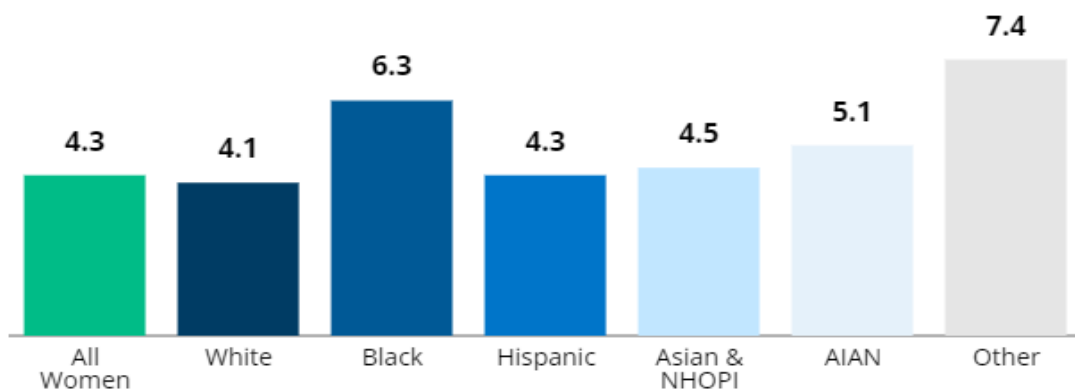
Spotlight: Women’s Mental Health

Mental health problems impact a person's thinking, feeling, behavior, or mood. These issues impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others. Providing for and supporting good mental health is a public health issue. In July 2022, the State of Nebraska implemented the 988 lifeline. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a nationwide three-digit dialing code that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More information about 988 can be found at: <https://988lifeline.org>

“One in five Nebraskans has a mental health or substance use disorder.” Marley Doyle, MD, director of the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska. There are different types of mental health disorders. These disorders can affect women and men differently. Some disorders are more common in women, such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. There are also certain disorders that are unique to women. For example, some women experience symptoms of depression at times of hormone change, such as during or after pregnancy (perinatal depression), around the time of their period (premenstrual dysphoric disorder), and during menopause (perimenopause-related depression).¹

The following chart shows the number of days women in Nebraska reported that they were mentally unhealthy:

Average Number of Poor Mental Health Days Reported in the Last 30 Days Among All Women by Race/Ethnicity, 2021, Nebraska



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts

Women are nearly twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with depression. Depression is a condition that affects a person’s emotional state that causes feelings of sadness and disconnection. It can occur at any age.

¹ Women and Mental Health [Fact sheet]. (2023, May). National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/women-and-mental-health>

For women, some mood changes and depressed feelings occur with normal hormonal changes, but hormonal changes alone don't cause depression. There are other contributing factors associated with depression such as genetics, personal life circumstances, and experiences. Many women experience depression during pregnancy.

Maternal depression is common among women in Nebraska, impacting 18% of women during pregnancy and up to 12% of women in the postpartum period.² It is associated with inadequate prenatal care, poor nutrition, higher preterm birth, low birth weight, pre-eclampsia, spontaneous abortion, substance abuse, and dangerous risk-taking behavior. Maternal depression encompasses a range of conditions that can affect women during pregnancy and up to one year postpartum. Perinatal depression is any time from becoming pregnant to around one year after giving birth. Antenatal depression is the period while you are pregnant and postnatal depression typically occurs within one month after giving birth and lasts for more than two weeks.

According to the 2020 Nebraska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Annual Report³, 12.1% of the women surveyed reported experiencing postpartum depressive symptoms.

18.5 MATERNAL POSTPARTUM VISIT

Maternal postpartum visit, Nebraska PRAMS, 2020				
	Weighted Frequency	Percent	95% Confidence Intervals	
Mother has had postpartum visit	20,905	88.3	86.3	90.4
Mother has not had postpartum visit	2,758	11.7	9.6	13.7

NE P8 Question 78

Missing n=21

18.7.1 Postpartum depression symptoms

Maternal postpartum depression symptoms, Nebraska PRAMS, 2020				
	Weighted Frequency	Percent	95% Confidence Intervals	
Had postpartum depression symptoms	2,865	12.1	9.9	14.3
Did not have postpartum depression symptoms	20,791	87.9	85.7	90.1

NE P8 Questions 80 and 81

Missing n=23

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, July 2). Prevalence of Selected Maternal and Child Health Indicators for Nebraska, Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), 2016–2019. https://www.cdc.gov/prams/prams-data/mch-indicators/states/pdf/2019/Nebraska_PRAMS_Prevalence-of-Selected-Indicators_2016-2019_508.pdf

³ Division of Public Health Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. (2023, February). Nebraska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) 2020 Annual Report.

When it comes to other mental disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, research has not found sex differences in the rates at which they are diagnosed. Certain symptoms may be more common in women than men, and the course of illness can be affected by a person's sex. Researchers are only now beginning to tease apart the various biological and psychosocial factors that may impact mental health.⁴

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, more than one in five women in the United States experienced a mental health condition in the past year, such as depression or anxiety in 2020. Most serious mental health conditions cannot be cured, but they can be treated.

Treatment for mental illnesses usually consists of therapy, medication, or a combination of the two. Some federal agencies offer information on mental health disorders, treatment options, and how to cover the cost of treatment.

In Nebraska, there are a number of mental health resources available to assist residents of the State. For example, there is the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in Nebraska. NAMI provides free mental health support, online groups, resources, and education.

In April 2022, then-Governor Ricketts signed into law LB905. LB905 (2022) allows the State Board of Medicine and Surgery to develop educational material, policies, and procedures to address perinatal and postnatal mental health disorders. The bill also allows licensed healthcare professionals and advanced practice registered nurses to educate pregnant women about perinatal and postnatal mental health and to offer pregnant women and new mothers a mental health screening questionnaire.

⁴ Women and Mental Health [Fact sheet]. (2023, May). National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/women-and-mental-health>