

Reproductive Health Statement II

Approved by the Midwives Alliance Board
September 2018



The Midwives Alliance of North America's (MANA) commitment to Reproductive Health extends to the health of families and communities.

MANA recognizes the pervasive influence of racial inequality, gender inequality, economic inequality, and the punitive enforcement of cultural norms on the health of all people.

MANA recognizes the resilience of disenfranchised communities, especially First Nations/Indigenous and Black people, who continue to thrive in the face of violence and terrorism, forced sterilization, and cultural genocide.

MANA recognizes that contemporary midwifery in the US has grown out of the knowledge of enslaved African midwives and healers from Indigenous and immigrant communities.

MANA affirms the right of all families to be treated with respect and compassion, without regard for sex, gender identity, race, color, marital status, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, or ability.

MANA calls for an end to:

- violence used as an agent of control against female bodied and female identified people
- the use of obstetric violence against people who assert their right to bodily integrity and decline unnecessary intervention and procedures
- unnecessary maternal mortality due to obstetric neglect, which is disproportionately perpetrated against women of color and low-income, lesbian, and gender non-conforming people
- the use of Child Protective Services as a means to enforce

medical compliance and cultural norms, and as a weapon against LGBTQIA2S+ families and people of color

MANA asserts the importance of extended postpartum care, including:

- paid parental leave to support family bonding, maternal health, and newborn health
- affordable breastfeeding education and assistance to support successful lactation
- the inclusion of screening and treatment for postpartum depression in routine care
- timely attention to symptoms of postpartum preeclampsia, delayed hemorrhage, and infection

MANA asserts the need for the ongoing support of childbearing families through:

- payment of a living wage for all working people to ensure parents have adequate time to participate in their child's growth and development
- adequate time during work hours, and clean, private space to pump or nurse infant/child without loss of pay
- availability of subsidized quality childcare, early preschool, and extended day programs in schools
- access to safe and affordable housing, availability of healthy food, clean water, fresh air, and adequate healthcare

MANA supports Article 14 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights which states:

Social responsibility and health:

1. The promotion of health and social development for their people is a central purpose of governments that all sectors of society share.

2. Taking into account that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, progress in science and technology should advance:

a. access to quality health care and essential medicines, especially for the health of women and children, because health is essential to life itself and must be considered to be a social and human good;

b. access to adequate nutrition and water;

c. improvement of living conditions and the environment;

d. elimination of the marginalization and the exclusion of persons on the basis of any grounds;

e. reduction of poverty and illiteracy.

Reference:

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, Records of the
General Conference 33rd session, Paris, October 3-21, 2005 p.74

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001428/142825e.pdf>

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