



# Addressing the Intersection of Health and Economic Inequities among Pregnant and Post-partum Women in Kenya during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately threatens vulnerable populations, including women and especially pregnant and post-partum women. Early estimates suggest that maternal and child deaths could increase by 8.7-38.6% and 9.8-44.7%, respectively, across low and middle-income countries (LMIC) due to disruptions in healthcare access and food insecurity. A global systematic review of impacts on maternal health found evidence of disruptions to healthcare services, reduced use of antenatal care, decreased access to family planning, and increased stress, anxiety, and depression related in part to isolation and fear of COVID-19 infection.<sup>3</sup> Approximately one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, there continues to be a lack of information on the social, economic, and health impacts of the pandemic on

pregnant and post-partum women and their infants, particularly from LMICs. Prior to the pandemic, Kenya, in particular, reported one of the highest rates of maternal and neonatal mortality in the world. Action-oriented research is needed to identify solutions and strategies for national and local government and communities. This policy brief provides information on the experiences of pregnant and post-partum women during COVID-19, with particular attention to healthcare access, maternal and newborn healthcare utilization, and maternal and newborn health.

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