



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 62706**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR**

Dear Medical Provider:

As you know, depression among women during and after pregnancy continues to be one of the major concerns among healthcare providers. Indeed, researchers believe that depression is one of the most common complications during and after pregnancy impacting both the mother and her child. Many new mothers suffer from perinatal depression and require treatment and counseling. However, many of these women do not realize they need help or are unable to find appropriate resources.

In Illinois, with your help, the efforts of my task force on perinatal depression and the work of statewide partnerships, we continue to change that reality for the better. To that end, important legislation was passed recently that places providers in an even greater role of creating awareness, educating, diagnosing and treating women. The Perinatal Mental Health Disorders Prevention and Treatment Act requires that:

- Licensed health care professionals providing prenatal care provide education to women, and if possible and with permission, to their families about perinatal mental health disorders
- All hospitals providing labor and delivery services provide new mothers, prior to discharge following childbirth, and if possible, provide fathers and other family members complete information about perinatal mental health disorders
- Licensed health care professionals providing prenatal care, postnatal care, and care to the infant invite the women to complete a questionnaire to assess whether they suffer from perinatal mental health disorders

Several state agencies are working together to provide resources to you, including:

- Training sessions for health care providers
- Screening, assessment and treatment tools and guidelines
- Free telephone or online consultation with perinatal mental health experts
- A statewide mental health resource hotline
- A crisis hotline
- Patient and family informational handouts

The attached notice to providers details some of the resources available to you. All of these resources can be found at www.Illinois.gov or by calling the Department of Human Services hotline at 1-800-843-6154. In addition, please forward this information to any of your colleagues who should know about this program and help us spread the word about this important legislation, which takes effect January 1, 2008.

Together, through this Perinatal Depression Initiative, we can work to provide increased support to women, their children, and their families during what should be the happiest moments of their lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rod Blagojevich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor