

Bridging the Gap in Maternal Health

By Manal Alzubaidy

In Dearborn, Michigan, many expecting and new mothers face a quiet but persistent challenge: accessing the care and support they need for a healthy pregnancy and postpartum recovery. While numerous state programs and nonprofit organizations exist to serve mothers, many women, particularly those from Middle Eastern and Arab communities, remain unaware of these services or struggle to navigate them due to language barriers, cultural differences, or financial constraints.

These barriers mean that essential resources, from mental health support to educational programs and basic postpartum care, often go unused, not because they aren't available, but because they aren't accessible.

My project seeks to change that. By working directly with obstetrics and gynecology medical practices and community organizations, I'm building a proactive system that connects women to the care they need before they even know to ask for it. Through clinic-based surveys, we identify mothers' needs and awareness of available programs. This information helps us connect each woman with the right resources, whether that's counseling for postpartum depression, in-home nursing visits for first-time mothers, or access to food and parenting classes.

It is equally important that there be follow-up. Too often, a flyer or referral ends up forgotten. We ensure ongoing communication so that women feel supported in taking the next step toward their health and well-being. This personalized approach transforms resources from a list on paper into life-changing services.

On World Humanitarian Day, it's important to remember that humanitarian work is not always about responding to faraway crises, it's also about addressing inequities in our own communities. By breaking down barriers and fostering meaningful connections between healthcare systems and the women they serve, we can ensure that no mother in Dearborn has to navigate pregnancy and postpartum alone.

When women are supported, entire communities thrive. This project is about more than health. It's about dignity, equity, and giving every mother the opportunity to begin her journey into parenthood with confidence and care.

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