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CONTACT: Andrew Bird
916.319.2011

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Frazier maternal mental health bill goes to governor

SACRAMENTO – As many as one in five new or expectant mothers will suffer a mental health disorder during pregnancy or in the first year following birth. AB 3032, a bill by Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Discovery Bay), would ensure mothers who give birth in California hospitals learn about common mental health issues and where to get help. The bill was given final approval by the Assembly today and now goes to the governor for his consideration.

“Maternal mental health disorders include depression, anxiety, and in more severe cases, postpartum psychosis,” Frazier said. “We have seen too many recent tragic examples of mothers of newborns being trapped by depression because they didn’t know where to get help or who to ask. AB 3032 directs California hospitals with perinatal units to develop a program to educate mothers and hospital staff about common maternal mental health issues and where to receive help.”

The bill would require that by Jan. 1, 2020 specified hospitals, in collaboration with medical staff, develop and implement an educational program that includes:

- Education and information for postpartum women and families about maternal mental health conditions, post-hospital treatment options, and community resources;
- Education and information for hospital employees regularly assigned to work in the perinatal unit, including registered nurses and social workers; and,

- Any other service the hospital determines should be included in the program to provide optimal patient care.

AB 3032 enjoyed unanimous bipartisan support throughout its journey in the Legislature. The bill is co-sponsored by 2020 Mom and Maternal Mental Health NOW, and has a long list of supporters that includes numerous nonprofit organizations and individuals.

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Assemblymember Frazier represents the 11th Assembly District, which includes the communities of Antioch, Bethel Island, Birds Landing, Brentwood, Byron, Collinsville, Discovery Bay, Fairfield, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Oakley, Pittsburg (partial), Rio Vista, Suisun City, Travis AFB, Vacaville and Walnut Grove.

CONTACT: Andrew Bird (916) 319-2011 Andrew.Bird@asm.ca.gov

