



**Lovelace Women's Health screening is discriminatory against Native Americans mothers and babies and the State should investigate**

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The Southwest Women's Law Center is committed to addressing systemic inequities and protecting all reproductive rights, including informed birthing choices, for New Mexico's women and girls. A *New Mexico In Depth* report recently brought to light allegations of a secret policy at Lovelace Women's Hospital that has unfairly singled out Native American mothers for COVID-19 testing, leading to the separation of Native mothers from their newborns during the immediate postpartum period. This critical developmental period is essential for new mothers to bond with their babies, establish their breastfeeding relationship, and develop secure attachment. The World Health Organization affirms that closeness between mother and baby during this early period should be supported even when the mother is COVID-19 positive. This is particularly important for communities that have experienced historical trauma, including violence, inequities, nonconsensual medical procedures, and children being separated from their families.

For centuries, Native American communities have faced injustices and systemic racism that have contributed to health disparities, including the current disparate impacts of COVID-19. Now we learn that Lovelace has unjustly and systematically disrupted the critical postpartum experience for Native American mothers and newborns through racial profiling in the midst of a pandemic. Although this policy is reportedly intended to limit the spread of COVID-19, it is clear that Native American mothers are being targeted based on their appearance and zip code. This "racial red-lining" is unacceptable, discriminatory, and a violation of medical ethics. We call upon the Governor's office to investigate this policy and its impact on Native American families.

Not only is this a continuation of long-standing injustices perpetrated against indigenous women, but this also harms future generations as the first crucial moments of their new lives are already being impacted by unjust and racist policy. We stand with Native American Mothers and with all mothers of color who face these continuing injustices. If you are a mother who has been impacted by Lovelace Women's Hospital's COVID-19 policy of separating mothers and newborns based on their race and home zip codes please contact the Southwest Women's Law Center for assistance at 505.244.0502 or [info@swwomenslaw.org](mailto:info@swwomenslaw.org).

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