

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://www.csvanw.org/local-native-led-nonprofits-address-concerns-over-hospitals-secret-policy-separating-native-american-newborns-from-their-mothers/>

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Curtison Badonie, (505) 243-9199 or cbadonie@csvanw.org

Local Native-Led Nonprofits Address Concerns Over Hospitals Secret Policy Separating Native American Newborns From Their Mothers

ALBUQUERQUE, NM June 16, 2020 The [Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women](#) (CSVANW) is outraged to learn of a [secret policy](#) that was implemented at Lovelace Womens Hospital to screen pregnant Native American women for COVID-19 based on their appearance in addition to their home ZIP code and subsequently separated from their newborns after delivery.

Violence against Native women takes many forms, says Angel Charley, CSVANW Executive Director, the policies implemented by Lovelace hospital is just one example of how violence has become so normalized in society against our women. Native women have a long history when it comes to not having fully informed consent during birth and this policy continues a reprehensible history of institutions making decisions on behalf of new mothers when it comes to their health.

While several Pueblos and the Navajo Nation in New Mexico have been hit hard by the coronavirus, recording some of the highest per capita rates of COVID-19 infection in the nation, it is important to note that not all tribes have high prevalence of COVID-19. For Lovelace to screen pregnant women to see if they look Native American and comparing their home ZIP code against a list of tribal reservation ZIP codes, maintained by the hospital, indicates the assumption that all Native people in New Mexico have COVID-19, says Charley.

While CDC guidelines currently suggest the temporary separation of newborns from a mother suspected of being symptomatic of Covid-19, says Indigenous Women Rising Co-Founder, Nicole Martin, we are concerned that performing this separation without informed consent is a racial targeting practice that targets Native mothers based on their ZIP code. [Indigenous Women Rising](#) is an organization committed to honoring Native and Indigenous Peoples inherent right to equitable and culturally safe health options through accessible education, resources and advocacy.

The policies implemented by Lovelace have raised concerns about racial profiling and patient consent which have since prompted an [investigation](#) from New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.

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Rape Abuse Incest National Network: 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE) www.rainn.org
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) www.ndvh.org
Strong Hearts Native Helpline: 1-844-762-8483 www.strongheartshelpline.org

We focus our work on communities and systems. We are not a direct service provider.

4600 Montgomery Blvd NE Ste B202, Albuquerque, NM 87109

Phone: (505) 243-9199
Fax: (505) 243-9966
Email us [here](#).

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