

My name is Melinda Anello. I am a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) and board member for Baby Blues Connection. We provide free, peer-based support to parents who are struggling with their mental health after welcoming a child into their lives. As a small, community-based organization, we make the most of our limited resources to provide vital support to new parents. I would love to share a bit about what I do with the organization.

As a PMHNP who specializes in perinatal mental health, I see firsthand the impacts of perinatal mood disorders on the mother/parent and family. These effects can be long-lasting and lead to devastating outcomes. As the co-lead of Outreach & Education with Baby Blues Connection, I work to foster relationships within our community, provide education about perinatal mood disorders, and the support that we provide.

I share this information with you because you might not be familiar with the work we do. In fact, there are several organizations like ours throughout the state. While doulas and other community healthcare worker roles are vitally important to the health and wellbeing of families, Baby Blues Connection too provide vital and sometimes lifesaving, services to the community that we serve.

Birth workers, doulas, and peer support can be the difference between surviving and thriving for a new parent and their work is crucial in preserving the health of the mother infant dyad. I urge you to consider appropriating funding to organizations like Baby Blues., that provide these services. Healthy communities start with early intervention. When we care for new mothers during pregnancy, we are nurturing the future of our community by ensuring the well-being and strength of both the next generation and the families who support them.

Thank you,

**Melinda P. Anello**

Melinda P. Anello, PMHNP-BC, PMH-C