



**Dr. Ellen Stang** is a pediatrician and the founder of Progeny Health, a national, tech-enabled women's healthcare company that is dedicated to providing care coordination and care management for maternity and premature baby care. As a board member of March of Dimes, she's supporting the many initiatives that are shaping the fight against maternal and infant mortality.

» **What is March of Dimes' "Equitable Doula Access Initiative"?** **Dr. Ellen Stang:** It's a major initiative for us right now. We're partnering with organizations to address the question, 'How can we train more community-based doulas?' The goal of this initiative is to help bridge the gap in maternal care access, especially in areas identified as maternal care deserts. Sometimes there are very adverse outcomes for the mom and the baby, especially in these areas that lack care. And it shouldn't be happening in a country that has the most incredible hospitals, researchers, doctors, nurses, and health care providers. By training and deploying more community-based doulas, March of Dimes wants to provide pregnant people with the support and advocacy that they need to ensure healthy pregnancies and deliveries.

» **How do March of Dimes' mobile health care vans better enable support for at-risks parents and infants?** **ES:** It's another effort to serve areas where people do not have access to the care they need. March of Dimes has deployed a fleet of mobile health care vans to reach pregnant women in these underserved areas. The vans can do full exams, draw blood and take care of patients, and do follow up visits for pregnant moms. The goal of these mobile units is to bring essential prenatal and postpartum services directly to communities that lack nearby hospitals, clinics or other maternity care providers.

» **What research initiatives is March of Dimes involved in?** **ES:** March of Dimes invests heavily in research efforts to better understand and address the challenges facing maternal and infant health. For example, the organization invests in research centers focused on premature birth. They are looking specifically to identify work that we should be doing, in addition to our work on access, to reduce premature births and improve maternal health outcomes. It helps us uncover new insights and strategies.

» **What is March of Dimes doing in terms of policy to address these goals?** **ES:** We have significant ongoing efforts in government advocacy and legislative initiatives. This advocacy work involves lobbying lawmakers and policymakers to secure funding and pass legislation that supports March of Dimes' mission. We have a whole team up on Capitol Hill making sure that there's funding to support programs and the research that address the rising rates of maternal and infant mortality, as well as legislation like the Premie Act and Stillbirth Prevention Act, which support maternal and infant health.

» **How does March of Dimes ensure their programs have as much impact as possible?** **ES:** Scalability is a key focus for March of Dimes. Whether it's the doula initiative or mobile health units, we carefully evaluate how effectively these programs can expand. Our leadership team uses data analysis to ensure that our programs are impactful and that they can be replicated across multiple different regions. This multifaceted approach helps ensure that our initiatives are built for long-term success, and that they can reach as many people as possible.