

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and supporting the health and wellness of Black mamas and birthing people by acknowledging April 11-17, 2021, as “Black Maternal Health Week”

WHEREAS, The fourth annual national Black Maternal Health Week, held April 11-17, 2021 will be a week of awareness, activism, and community building intended to deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the United States; and

WHEREAS, National Minority Health Month is a month-long initiative to advance health equity across the country on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week was started by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, a Black women-led cross-sectoral alliance centering Black mothers to advocate, drive research, build power, and shift cultural paradigms for Black maternal health, rights, and justice; and

WHEREAS, The Black Mamas Matter Alliance strives to center the voices of Black mamas, women, families, and stakeholders, as well as provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth, and reproductive justice; and

WHEREAS, Further, the campaign aims to enhance community organizing on Black maternal health; and

WHEREAS, Black Mamas Matter Alliance will host the national Black Maternal Health Conference online April 16-17, 2021; and

WHEREAS, The campaign and activities for Black Maternal Health Week serve to amplify the voices of Black mamas and center the values and traditions of the reproductive and birth justice movements; and

WHEREAS, The California Black Women’s Health Project, Center for Reproductive Rights, Cityblock, Elvie, Health Connect One, JSI, Mama Rise Up, Merck for Mothers, National Association to Advance Black Birth, National Partnership for Women and Families, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Postpartum Support Virginia, Queen Village, Rhia Ventures, ROOTT, Shafia Monroe Consulting, SisterSong, Vintner’s Daughter, State Innovation Exchange and Wolomi are sponsors of Black Maternal Health Week 2021; and

WHEREAS, Activities during Black Maternal Health Week are rooted in human rights, reproductive justice, and birth justice frameworks; and

WHEREAS, Events for Black Maternal Health week will be held locally by the Oshun Family Center. Oshun provides racially concordant care to members of the Black community that are impacted by postpartum mood changes, birth, and racial trauma. Oshun works with allies, legislators, lawmakers, hospitals, educators, and the community to shift from raising awareness to becoming action-oriented in regard to the Black Maternal Mortality rate; and

WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women in the United States are 3 to 4 times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes; and

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications, known as “maternal morbidities,” twice as often as white women; and

WHEREAS, The high rates of maternal mortality among Black women span across income levels, education levels and socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, Racism and discrimination play a consequential role in maternal health care experiences and outcomes of Black birthing people; and

WHEREAS, A fair and wide distribution of resources and birth options, especially with regard to reproductive health care services and maternal health programming, are critical to closing the racial gap in maternal health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Further, the United States ranks last globally amongst all developed nations in terms of maternal mortality; and

WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 700 women die each year in the United States as a result of pregnancy or delivery complications; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s data on pregnancy-related mortality found that non-Hispanic Black women experienced a higher pregnancy-related mortality ratio than all other racial and ethnic populations; and

WHEREAS, The National Center for Health Statistics reports that there were an estimated 17.4 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018, resulting in 658 deaths; and

WHEREAS, Black women are most disproportionately affected with a mortality rate of 37.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 14.7 deaths per 100,000 live births and 11.8 deaths per 100,000 live births for white and Hispanic women, respectively; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports that there was a 21.4 percent increase in pregnancy-associated deaths in the state between 2013 and 2018 and non-Hispanic Blacks accounted for 23 percent of pregnancy associated-deaths while only accounting for 14 percent of births; and

WHEREAS, Between 2013-2018, there were 110 pregnancy-associated deaths of Philadelphia residents at an average of 18 deaths per year. Fifty-two percent of the pregnancy-associated deaths occurred in women younger than 30; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, Black women are 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than white women; and

WHEREAS, Non-Hispanic Black women made up for 43% of live births in Philadelphia but accounted for 73% of the pregnancy-related deaths from 2013 to 2018, as compared to non-Hispanic white women who made up 26% of Philadelphia births and accounted for 19% of pregnancy related deaths; and

WHEREAS, Black women have historically had the highest maternal mortality rates due to a combination of effects from institutional racism that have resulted in susceptibility to certain health conditions and lack of access to quality prenatal care; and

WHEREAS, Dozens of global organizations who are fighting to end maternal mortality globally in advocating that the United Nations recognize April 11th as the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights; and

WHEREAS, There is a great need for increased education, awareness, and solutions to disproportionate maternal mortality rates amongst Black women; therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize April 11-17, 2021, as “Black Maternal Health Week” in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Oshun Family Center, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.

Katherine Gilmore Richardson
Councilmember At-Large

Cindy Bass
Councilmember, Eighth District

April 8, 2021

Co-sponsors: Councilmember Gauthier, Councilmember Gym, Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember Parker,