



BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

APRIL 11-17, 2022

#BMHW22

April 11, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

The 65 undersigned organizations and individuals are in full support of the 2022 Black Maternal Health Week Resolution led by Representative Alma Adams (NC-12), Representative Lauren Underwood (IL-14), and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ).

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) campaign. Founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, BMHW is a week of awareness, activism, and community building intended to: deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the US; amplify community-driven policy, research, and care solutions; center the voices of Black Mamas, women, families, and stakeholders; provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth and reproductive justice; and enhance community organizing on Black maternal health.

Black Maternal Health Week takes place every year from April 11 –17 and was officially recognized by the White House for the first time in 2021 and again in 2022. The month of April is recognized in the United States as National Minority Health Month – a month-long initiative to advance health equity across the country on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities. Additionally, we are joining dozens of global organizations who are fighting to end maternal mortality globally in recognizing April 11th as the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights.

The BMHW 2022 theme, “*Building for Liberation: Centering Black Mamas, Black Families and Black Systems of Care,*” reflects BMMA’s commitment to center Black women’s

scholarship, maternity care work, and advocacy across the full-spectrum of sexual, maternal, and reproductive health care. This theme also uplifts Black Feminist and womanist approaches to strengthening wellness structures within our communities and across the Diaspora, as a revolutionary act in pursuit of liberation and in the global fight to end maternal mortality.

The Black Maternal Health Week Resolution describes the state of the maternal health crisis in the United States, which disproportionately impacts Black women and birthing people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women in the United States are three times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes and suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications twice as often as white women. Black women are 49 percent more likely than white women to deliver prematurely. The high rates of maternal mortality among Black women and birthing people span across socioeconomic levels and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Structural racism, gender oppression, and the social determinants of health inequities contribute significantly to the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing people.

The Black Maternal Health Week Resolution also outlines solutions. It calls on Congress to enact policies grounded in the reproductive justice, birth justice, and human rights frameworks. Congress must pass the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2021 and work to prioritize and engage Black women and birthing people in policy and program development and implementation. With the support of the undersigned organizations and of our Congressional champions, we believe we can build a world in which Black Mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy.

Sincerely,

A Better Balance
Ancient Song Doula Services
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Atlanta Doula Collective
Birthing Cultural Rigor, LLC
Black Girls Vote
Black Health New Mexico
Black Mamas Matter Alliance
Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association
Black Women Birthing Justice
Black Women for Wellness Action Project
Black Women's Health Imperative
Breana N. Lipscomb, MPH
Center for Black Women's Wellness
Center for Reproductive Rights
Chocolate Milk Café National Inc.
CHOICES Memphis Center for Reproductive Health
CinnaMoms
Coalition to Expand Contraceptive Access (CECA)
Community Catalyst

Diversity Uplifts, Inc.
Feminist Women's Health Center
Flora and Fauna Reproductive Wellness
Health Equity Resources and Strategies (H.E.R.S.)
In Joie's Arms Birth Doula Services, LLC
Irth App
Jamaa Birth Village
JMM Health Solutions
Majaica
Mamatoto Village
March of Dimes
MILK Research Lab
Monica R. McLemore, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN
Narrative Nation Inc.
NATAL
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Black Midwives Alliance
National Perinatal Task Force
New Mexico Birth Equity Collaborative
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
Nzuri Malkia Birth Cooperative
Paige Innovative Consulting, LLC
Perinatal Equity Initiative
Perinatal Health Equity Initiative
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Restoring Our Own Through Transformation (ROOTT)
Shades Of Blue Project
Shafia Monroe Consulting, LLC
SisterLove Inc.
SisterReach
Sisters in Loss
SisterSong: National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
South LA/South Bay African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Community Action Team
Southeast Michigan Perinatal Quality Improvement Coalition
Southern Birth Justice Network
State Innovation Exchange
The Afiya Center
The Bloom Collective
The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness
The Melanated Mammary Atlas®
Village Birth International
WIN (Westside Infant-Family Network)
Women with a Vision