



NICHQ recognizes April 11-17, 2021 as Black Maternal Health

Week — a week of awareness, activism, and community building to lift the voices and improve the birthing experience for Black people. By listening to Black mothers and birthing people and approaching our quality improvement efforts with an equity lens, we can work to reduce the persistent and unacceptable disparities in maternal and reproductive health.

This is the fourth annual [Black Maternal Health Week](#) hosted by the [Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#), a Black women-led cross-sectoral alliance dedicated to ensuring that Black mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy. Join NICHQ in honoring their vision by using their [social media toolkit](#), [webinars](#), and [resources](#) to deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health.

April is also [National Minority Health Month](#) — a month-long initiative to advance health equity by raising awareness of the inequities in care and access, social and economic factors, and the enduring effects of structural racism, prejudice, and discrimination for minority populations. Our goal is for the lessons shared this week to inspire change so that all mothers and birthing people, and their babies, experience improved health outcomes.

## Support Black Mothers

As public health professionals and care providers, it's important to support Black mothers and birthing people throughout every step of their childbirth journey. Join NICHQ on social media by sharing strategies and best practices for improving maternal health. Looking for inspiration? Click each daily theme below for resources and articles to learn from and share.

### [MONDAY: Preventing Preterm Birth](#)

Black babies are at much higher risk of being born preterm or low birth weight due to their mothers increased exposure to toxic stress from institutionalized racism. Targeted interventions and policy efforts, outlined in this [case study](#), can play a significant role in reducing preterm birth rates.

**Related NICHQ Initiative:** [Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality \(Infant Mortality CoIIN\)](#)

### **THURSDAY: Addressing Maternal Depression**

Black mothers are at a higher risk of experiencing postpartum depression and less likely to receive the care they need. **This resource** shares tips for helping Black mothers and families understand the signs of maternal depression and can connect them with the support they need to heal.

**Related NICHQ Initiative:** [Common Metrics to Drive Change in Early Childhood Systems](#)

### **TUESDAY: Achieving Breastfeeding Goals**

Lower breastfeeding rates among Black women in large part reflect historic and systemic inequities. Peer and family support groups for Black mothers can improve support and deepen our understanding of the needs of the women in their community and insight into system gaps and barriers that perpetuate breastfeeding disparities. [Read this article](#) to learn more.

**Related NICHQ Initiative:** [National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network \(NAPPSS-IIN\)](#)

### **FRIDAY: Be an Ally to Black Mothers**

When fathers are involved during pregnancy, mothers are 1.5 times more likely to receive prenatal care in the first trimester, which has positive implications for both maternal and infant health. [Learn how fathers](#) can support mothers in breastfeeding and in following safe sleep guidelines, both of which can reduce infant deaths.

**Related NICHQ Initiative** [Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project \(SHSPP\)](#)

### **WEDNESDAY: Reducing Maternal Mortality**

Black mothers are dying from pregnancy-related deaths at over four times the rate of white women. Reducing Black maternal mortality starts with understanding the individual experiences of Black mothers. [Learn how](#) listening sessions can reveal significant barriers to care that Black mothers are facing.

**Related NICHQ Initiatives:** [National Network of Perinatal Quality Collaboratives](#), [New York State Birth Equity Improvement Project](#)



## **NICHQ's Commitment to Birth Equity**

Taking actions to improve both the experience of care and perinatal outcomes for Black birthing people is at the core of NICHQ's [New York State Birth Equity Improvement Project](#) – a collaboration with the [New York State Perinatal Quality Collaborative \(NYSPQC\)](#) and the [New York State Department of Health](#)

This initiative, centering on patient's experiences, is engaging a multidisciplinary team of hospital staff including clinical staff, administrative staff and executive-level leaders to identify how individual and systemic racism impacts birth outcomes at their organizations. [Learn more](#) about this effort underway.

