

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025

# **Power to the People: Centering Families to Transform Maternal & Infant Health**

**nich**

National Institute for  
Children's Health Quality



six dimensions



# Today's Agenda

- Welcome & Introduction
- The Role of CCHI and Six Dimensions
- The Clinical Partners in CCHI
- The Community in CCHI
- Audience Q&A
- Call to Action
- Final Remarks







# Welcome & Introduction

**Nakeitra L. Burse, DrPH, CHES**  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Six Dimensions





# Power to the People

Centering Families to Transform Maternal & Infant Health



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# WHO WE ARE

Six Dimensions is a woman led, Mississippi-based nonprofit organization focused on improving maternal health outcomes.

Established in 2016, but in 2023, we made the transition to nonprofit organization from for profit in order to better serve our community.





# OUR TEAM



**Nakeitra L. Burse, DrPH, CHES**  
Founder | Executive Director



**Asia Rush, MPH, CHES**  
Program Manager



**Chelsie Dorsey**  
Outreach & Advocacy  
Coordinator



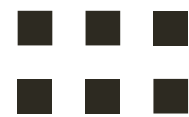


# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enhance Black maternal health outcomes through:

- Rigorous research
- Comprehensive training
- Proactive outreach, &
- Impactful advocacy

We are dedicated to honoring history, respecting culture, and amplifying the voices of the community as we strive for positive change in maternal healthcare.







## MISSISSIPPI DATA

- In Mississippi between 2016 and 2020, there were a total of 167 maternal deaths occurring during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy.
- The MS pregnancy-related mortality ratio is 42.2 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- The pregnancy-related mortality ratio for Black women in Mississippi is 65.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, four times the White ratio of 16.2.



## MISSISSIPPI DATA

- The pregnancy-related mortality rate was highest (81.5 per 100,000 live births) in women within the 35-39 age group from years 2016-2020.
- During the five-year period (2016-2020), the majority (43%) of pregnancy related deaths occurred in women who were pregnant, 43 days up to 1 year post pregnancy and before death.
- During the five-year period (2016-2020), 80% of pregnancy-related deaths were deemed preventable.
- Of all pregnancy-related deaths between 2016-2020, 92.3% had some level of chance to alter the final outcome (death).
- From 2016-2020, there were a total of 167 pregnancy associated deaths in which 39% were pregnancy related.



A large group of diverse Black women are posed for a group photo in a room with stone walls and a stained glass window. They are dressed in a variety of styles, from professional blazers to patterned dresses. Many of the women are wearing small, circular white pins on their clothing. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent white overlay containing text.

# UNDERSTANDING MISSISSIPPI'S HEALTHCARE CRISIS: A HISTORICAL LENS

- Legacies of racial segregation in healthcare
- Rural disinvestment & policy neglect
- Distrust, disparities & Inequities in health



# HOW WE ARE CENTERING COMMUNITY...



**RESEARCH**



**TRAINING &  
DEVELOPMENT**



**OUTREACH &  
ADVOCACY**



# RESEARCH

Through our research we aim to:

- Bridge the gap between researchers and community
- Support the need for birth workers as part of the maternal health team
- Understand the ongoing and evolving needs of Black mothers in Mississippi

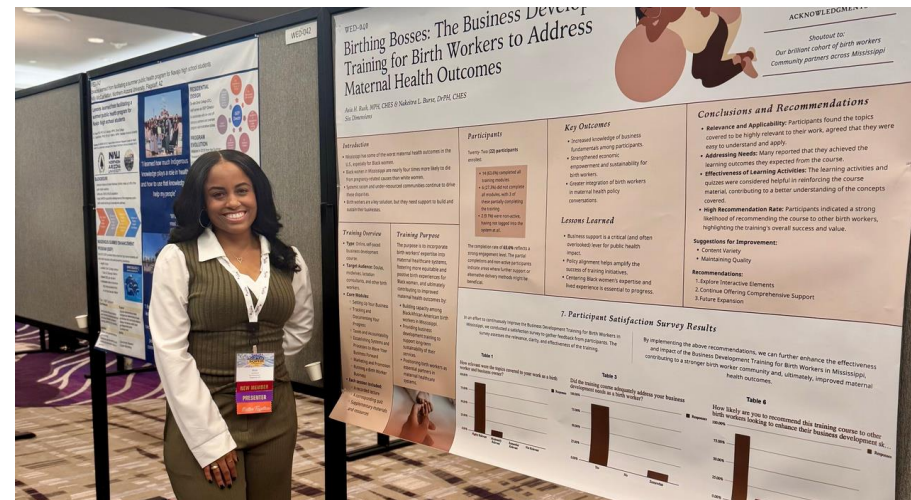


# Training & Development





# OUTREACH





# ADVOCACY







# RADICALLY REIMAGINING HEALTHCARE IN MISSISSIPPI

- From scarcity to sovereignty
- From institutions to ecosystems
- From transactions to trust
- From extraction to investment
- From silence to story
- From “fixing” to listening





# The Role of CCHI and Six Dimensions

**Stacy Scott, PhD, MPA, CSJ**  
Vice President  
NICHQ





# Our Vision

NICHQ envisions a world where every community, filled with realized power, leads transformative efforts that achieve optimal health for mothers, birthing families, and infants.



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# Our Mission

Community-Centered Hospital Initiative (CCHI) aims to create a roadmap in which communities will lead and collaborate with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs), healthcare entities, and Perinatal Quality Collaboratives (PQCs), focusing on joint initiatives to optimize health outcomes for mothers, birthing families, and infants.



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*The Future is Now*



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We encourage communities to be proactive in creating a better future and collectively work together to save lives by *learning from the past, working in the present, and positively impacting the future.*

# ***Positively Impacting the Future***



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# Creating a Roadmap that Leads to Success

- The key is to define success not just in terms of outputs or metrics, but also in building trust, centering community voice, and enabling transformative change, even if that change is gradual and requires persistent, thoughtful navigation of challenges.
- Ultimately, the innovative, community-driven strategies developed through CCHI will contribute to measurable improvements in maternal, pregnancy, and infant health outcomes.





# Radical Imagination

- Using our radical imagination to address complex systemic issues requires a willingness to step outside traditional, linear thinking.
- Building trust and psychological safety within the team and with external partners is crucial for allowing the flexibility and openness required for this type of transformative work.





# Radical Imagination

“Stepping outside the confines of the now into the expansiveness of what could be.”

**Dr. Tanisha G. Hill-Jarrett**

Hill-Jarrett TG. The Black radical imagination: a space of hope and possible futures. *Frontiers in Neurology*. 2023;14





# The Clinical Partners in CCHI

**Sharla Smith, BS, MPH, PhD**  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Kansas Birth Equity Network



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# KANSAS BIRTH EQUITY NETWORK: TRANSFORMING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH THROUGH COMMUNITY

SHARLA SMITH, PHD, MPH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, POPULATION HEALTH

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, KANSAS BIRTH EQUITY NETWORK

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MEDICAL CENTER

# KBEN

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Kansas Birth  
Equity Network

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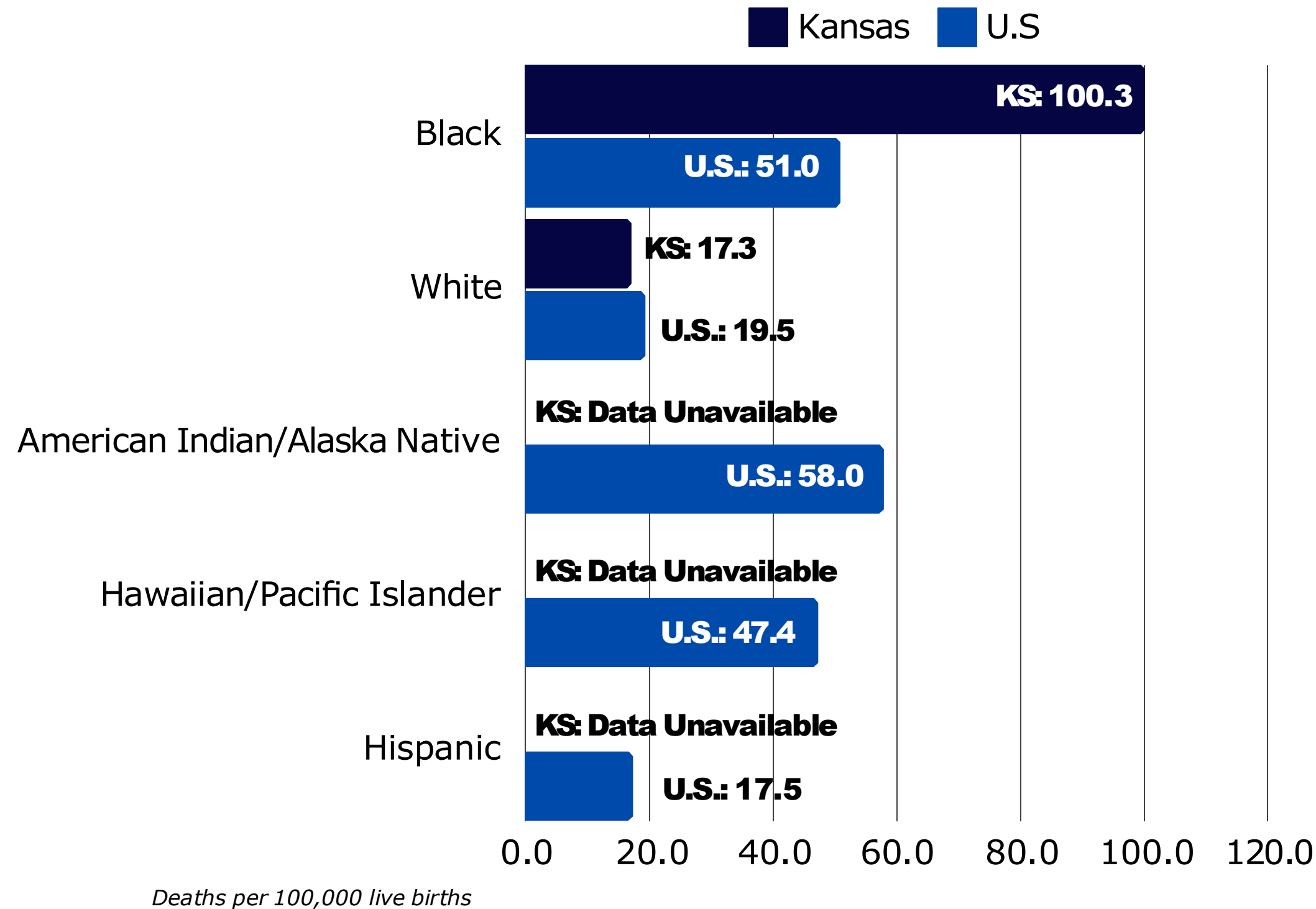




# THE DISPARITIES IN KANSAS!



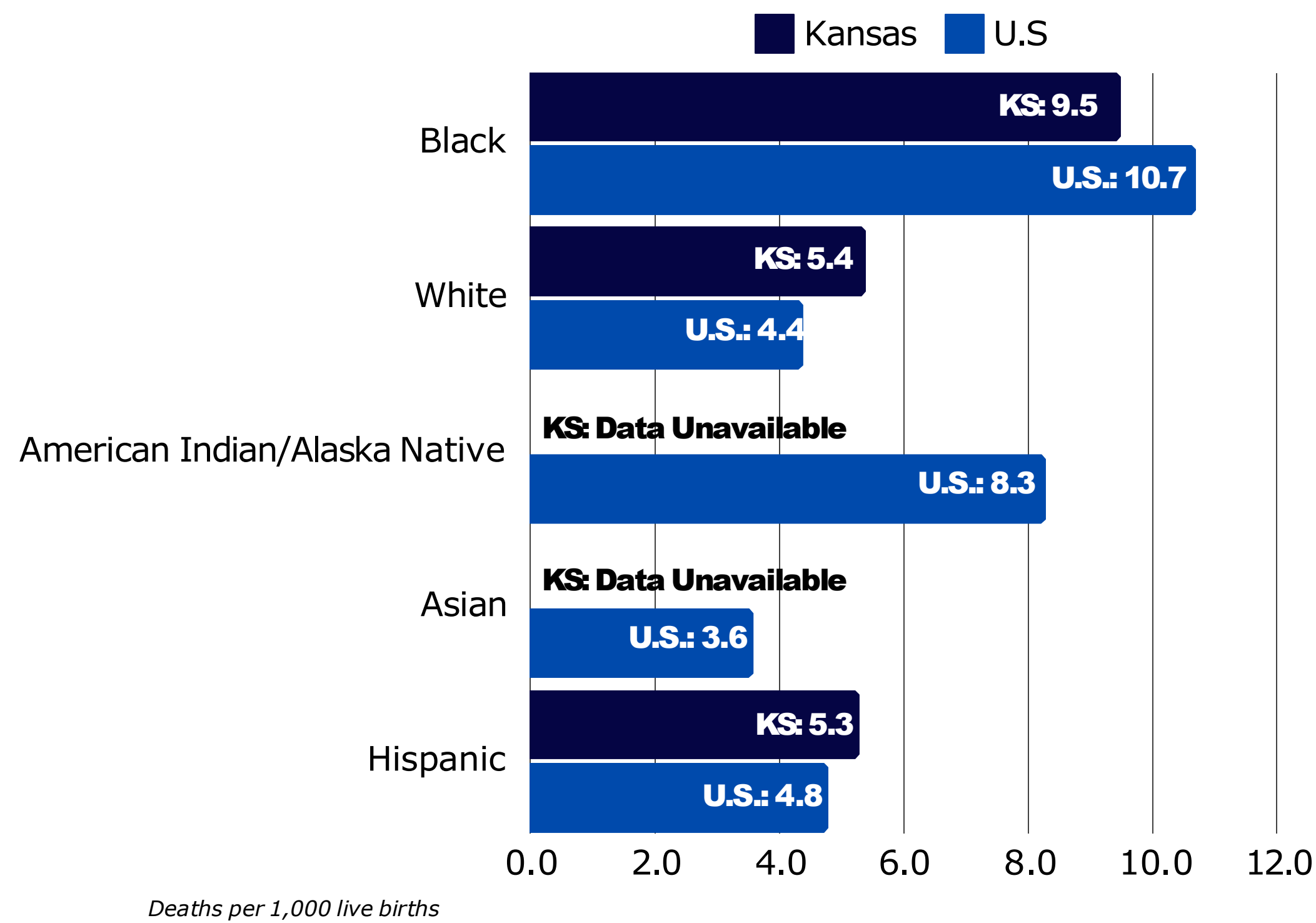
# Maternal Mortality: Kansas



In Kansas, Black women and birthing people are **5.8** times more likely to die from pregnancy related issues than white birthing people.



# Infant Mortality: Kansas



In Kansas, Black infants are 1.8 times more likely to die than white infants.





THE WHY?



# WEATHERING

Discrimination and marginalization can also slowly chip away at one’s health, causing those who are at the receiving end of discriminatory attitudes to age or even die prematurely.

The term “weathering” was coined in 1992 (Trusted Source by Dr. Arline Geronimus.)

The health of African American women may begin to deteriorate in early adulthood as a physical consequence of cumulative socioeconomic disadvantage.

They pull out one piece at a time, at a time, and another piece and another piece, until you sort of collapse.

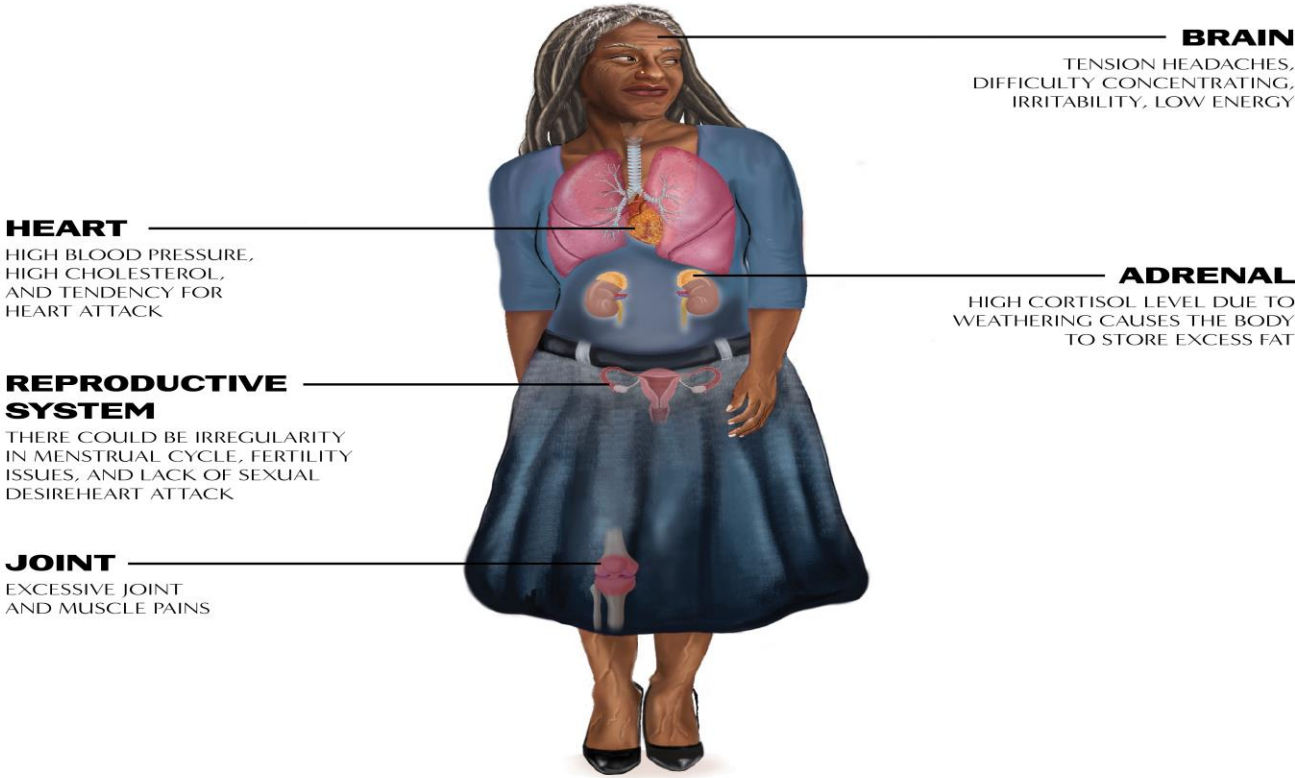
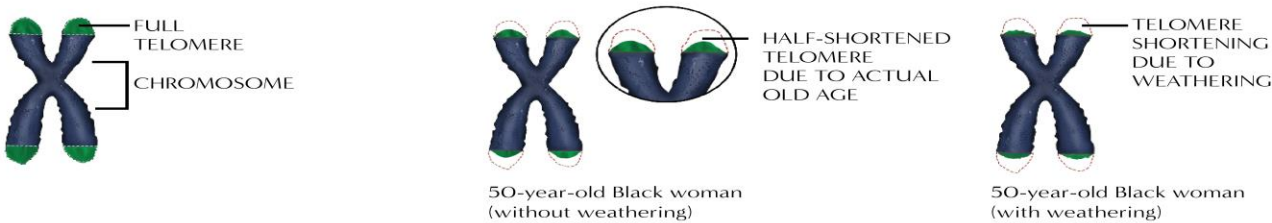
# WEATHERING



Weathering refers to how the constant stress of racism can contribute to premature biological aging which leads to poor health outcomes in Black people. Weathering symptoms can be emotional, physical, or behavioral. When one is exposed to repeated or chronic stress, the allostatic load (the wear and tear on the body) increases.

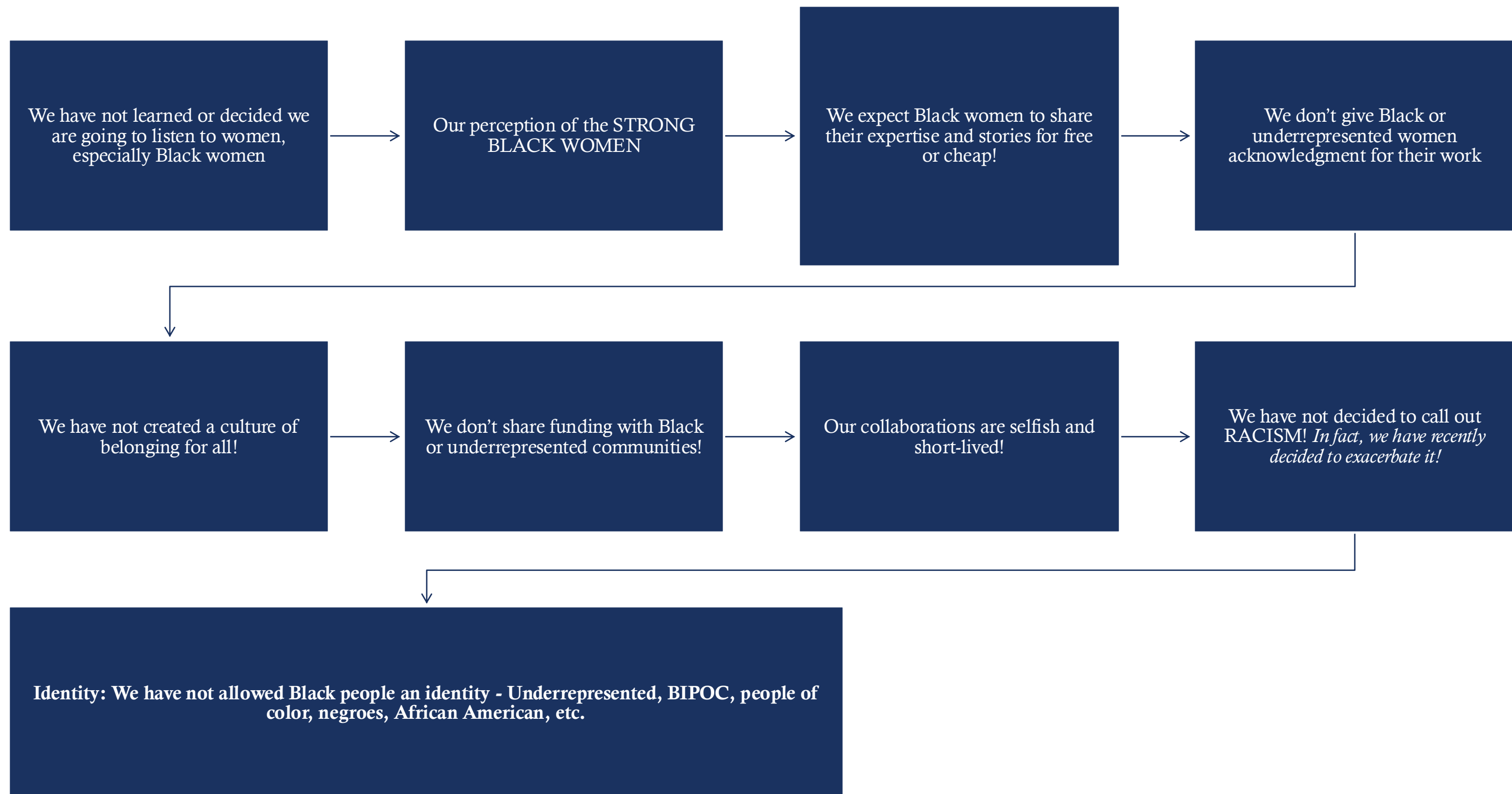
Higher cortisol levels from being in a constant state of fight-or-flight are one result of this increased stress. Chronic stress can contribute to a wide range of negative health outcomes over time, from depression and migraines to hypertension and heart disease. A recent study found Black adults had a biological age that was 2.6 years older than their chronological age compared to White adults who had a biological age of 3.5 years younger than their chronological age.

© Chidibere Ibe, 2022, obtained from www.illustratechange.com.





# PERCEPTIONS AND IDENTITY THEFT: WHO CONTROLS THE NARRATIVE OF BLACK POWER?





THERE IS HOPE

BLACK FAMILIES  
ARE MORE THAN  
THE DATA AND  
THE NARRATIVE!





## MISSION AND VISION

KBEN Vision: Every Black mom, dad, and infant receives quality and intentional prenatal, neonatal, and postpartum care in the state of Kansas.

CD366 Vision: Every Black mom, dad, and baby celebrates the baby's first birthday.

# KBEN

Kansas Birth  
Equity Network





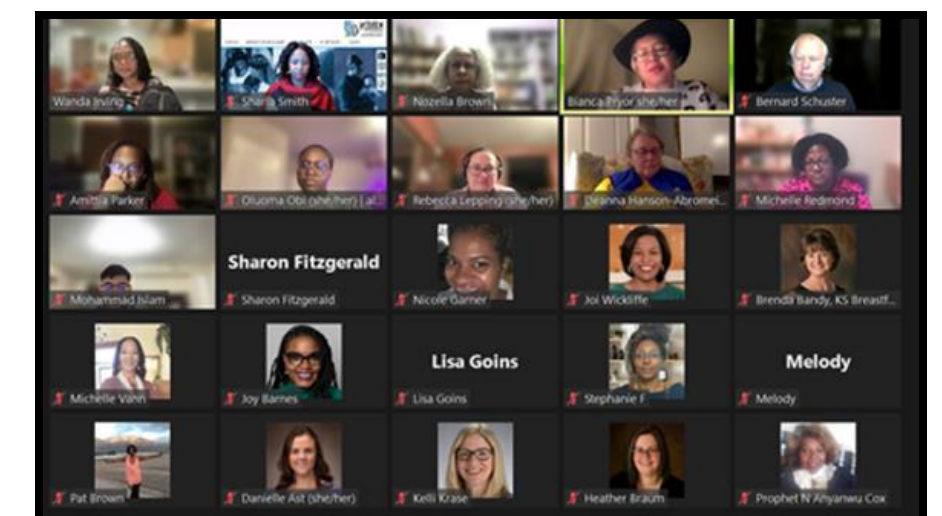
# Who We Are

## Our Root: Community

- Collaboration with Divine Nine Chapters in Wichita, KS
  - Raise awareness
  - Develop solutions
  - Celebrate Black Families: Celebrate Day 366

## Today:

- Community-Centered Network
- Members across Kansas & KC Metro
- Diverse Members: birth workers, clinicians, parents, community members, & more!
- Center the experiences of Black families
- Create space for collaboration
- Celebrate Black Babies & Families
- Develop solutions that improve the health of Black families

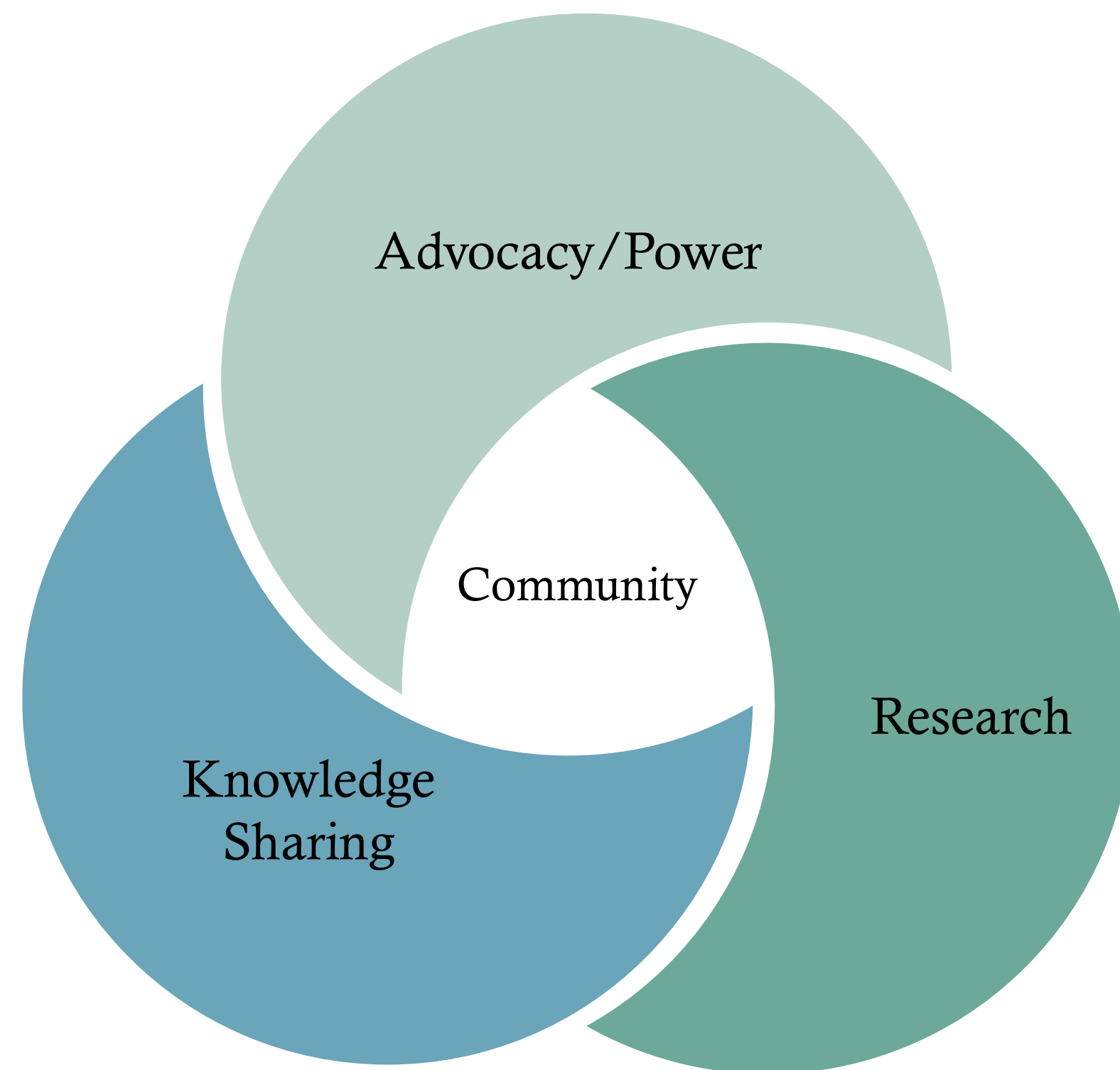




# Our Approach

## KBEN Definition of Birth Equity

*Shifting the focus from blaming Black mothers and birthing people for their health outcomes to holding systems accountable—demanding policies, programs, and reparative action that acknowledge and heal historical trauma.*





# Research

## *Research Agenda / Solutions List*

### Areas of Focus:



#### Maternal & Infant Health Research

[Pregnancy Related Hypertension & Preeclampsia](#)

[Prenatal Care](#)

[Maternal Mental Health](#)



#### Healthcare Systems



#### Policy & Advocacy

## FIVE-YEAR RESEARCH AGENDA ON BLACK MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

# KBEN

Kansas Birth  
Equity Network



Kansas Birth Equity Network

February 2022



# Capacity Building

*Healthy Blue Mini Grants*

**\$50,000 in Mini Grant Funding**

## 01 **Male Postpartum Mental Health**

*Rodney Copridge*

A conversation centered on mental health for fathers in the postpartum period.

## **Weekend of Washing: Family Day**

*Kimberly Weaver*

Adds a Saturday Family Day to an existing free laundromat initiative that is typically on the 3rd Monday of each month.

## **Perinatal Mental Health**

*Dr. Amittia Parker*

Where, When, How does perinatal mental health screening occur in the KC Metro?

### Broderick Crawford Birth Equity Mini Grants

Sistahs Can We Talk Health Fair	Children's Mercy Hospital: Community Support Funds
Dope Black Dads Fatherly Celebration	Joyea Marshall: Community Support Grant
Sister Doula Film Screening Event	Nozella Brown: Transformative Women's Experience
Dope Black Dads: New Dad Workshops	Kyle Ellison: Women's Health Song
Queens Village Maternal Healing Meetups	Storytailor: Stories about Maternal and Infant Health
Topeka Doula Project: Black Maternal Health Week Event	Event Funding for Health of the Community
Gestational Diabetes Project	Event Funding for Health of the Community
Diamonds N Rough: Mens Postpartum Workshop	Event Funding for Health of the Community

*Supporting & Amplifying Existing  
Community Efforts*



# Knowledge

## *Birth Equity Training*

- Developed with KBEN members
- Centers the lived experiences of Black birthing persons and partners, doulas, etc.
- Stop, Look, Listen, & Think Campaign

### **Kansas Perinatal Quality Collaborative**

- Partnership with KDHE & KPQC
- Provided training to Fourth Trimester Initiative Champions & their colleagues across the state

Module	Title
1	Introduction
2	The Need for Birth Equity
3	Community Engagement
4	The Uncomfortable Truth of Bias
5	The Black Postpartum Experience
6	Respectful Maternal Care



SCIENTIFIC TERM/OTHER TERMS	MEANING	EQUITABLE CHOICE
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Non-compliant

No choice in the  
care/decision making

Low Patient Activation

Vulnerable/Marginali  
zed

No Value to society

Low Societal Support

Uneducated/under-  
educated

De-valued/Lack of  
knowledge to care for  
yourself and child

Learning communities

Those people

No value

No replacement

Low-income

Unworthy of equitable care

Underprivilege/Non-  
privileged individuals

Single-Parents

No fathers/partners

Partnerships/ Parenting  
Solo

Race

Racism

BIRTH EQUITY  
TERMINOLOGY



# Equity in Healthcare

*Birth Equity Clinical Scholars Training Program (BEST)*

**Partnership w KUMC OBGYN & Family Medicine Residency Programs**

- 2 Year Fellowship Program
  - Educate and empower providers to create and sustain inclusive, accessible, and equitable maternal care, specifically for Black women.
  - Trained in Birth Equity
  - Monthly Didactics in research, policy, community engagement, and coordination of care
  - Service Projects with Community Organizations
    - Shadowing MCHWs & Doulas
    - Service at Uzazi Village
  - Research Project related to birth equity & reproductive justice
  - Policy Engagement





# Advocacy/Power/Equity

## *Policy Partners*

- *Thrive Allen County*
- *Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition*
- *Kansas Birth Justice Society*

## **KS Paid Family Leave**

- Partnership with KS organizations to advance family-centered policies.
- We provide information to guide advocacy efforts.

## **Kansas Momnibus Act**

## **Zero to 3: Built for Babies Convening**







FATHERHOOD: PUTTING THE “P” IN  
MCH- MPCH

BARBERSHOP INITIATIVE: PATERNAL  
POSTPARTUM HEALTH

BARBERSHOPS

REACHING  
OVER 110  
CLIENTS



# INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH



Meeting Needs



Engaging and  
Building Trust



Research Knowledge  
and Recruitment

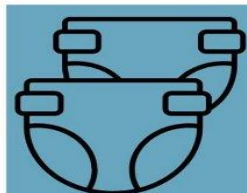


## ITEMS WILL INCLUDE:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body wash
- Hand soap
- Diapers
- Deodorant
- Laundry soap
- Toilet paper
- Personal care hygiene products

## RESOURCE DEPOT

Join us for a monthly community event! We will have items available to you at no charge to help you keep your family healthy and happy.



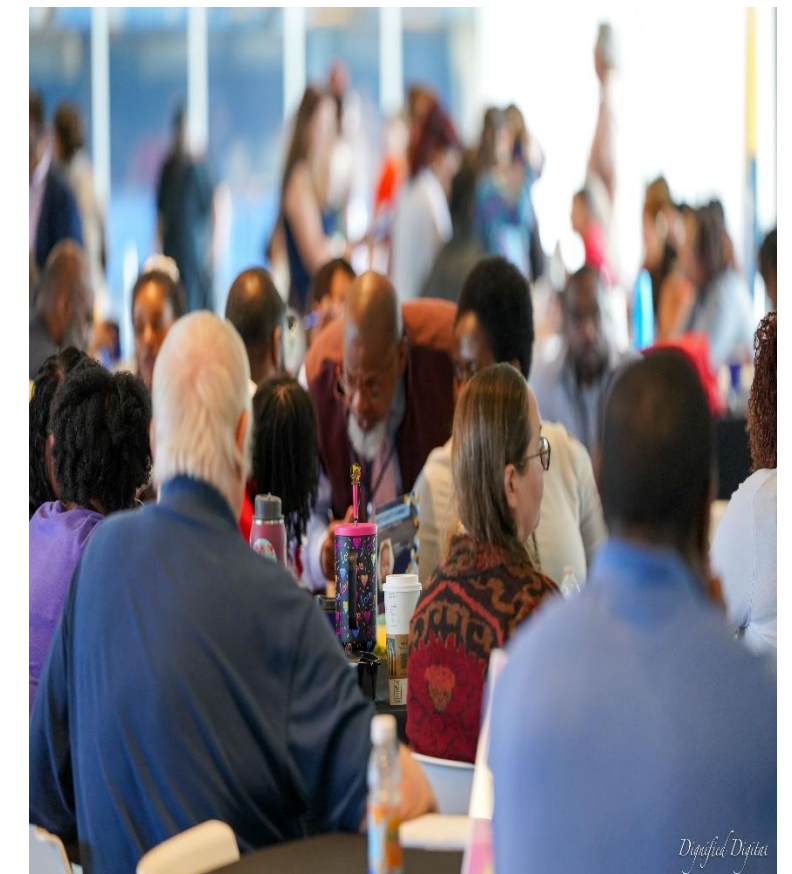
**3RD  
SATURDAY  
OF EVERY  
MONTH**  
10AM TO NOON

## GUIDING STAR MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

3035 N 27th St  
Kansas City, KS 66104



[WWW.K-BEN.ORG](http://WWW.K-BEN.ORG)





## WHAT'S NEXT: **Shaping the Future Together**

- Statewide Collaboration: **Kansas Community Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality**
  - Centering the Community
    - Listening Sessions
  - Shifting from hierarchical structures (hospital-led) to shared leadership
  - Championing shared power and mutual respect between:
    - Community Voices
    - Hospital Systems
    - PQCs



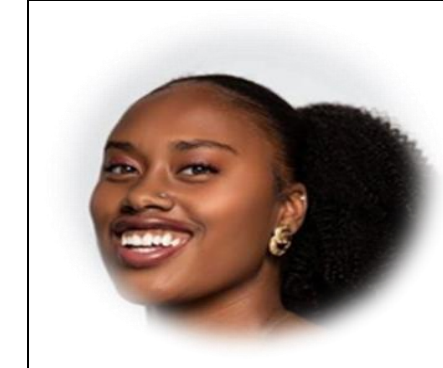
# Our Team



**Sharla Smith, PhD, MPH**  
Founder & Director



**Oluoma Obi**  
Project Manager



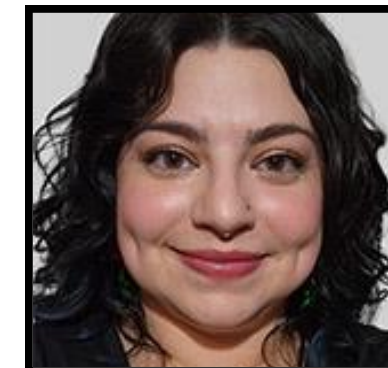
**Daijah Jones**  
Research Associate



**Claire Metcalf**  
Graduate Research Assistant



**Shea Roy Kempsen**  
Graduate Research Associate



**Elizabeth Madrigal**  
Research Associate

<https://www.kumc.edu/school-of-medicine/academics/departments/population-health/research/kansas-birth-equity-network.html>

<https://www.k-ben.org/>





**Sapphire Garcia-Lies**  
Patient Advocate Lead



**Rev. Tony Carter**  
Community Engagement Manager



**Kyle Ellison**  
Patient Advocate Lead



**Shalese Clay**  
Patient Advocate Lead



# Thank You!



[www.tinyurl.com/KSBirthEquity](http://www.tinyurl.com/KSBirthEquity)



[kben@kumc.edu](mailto:kben@kumc.edu)



[@ksbirthequity](https://www.facebook.com/ksbirthequity)



[@ksbirthequity](https://www.instagram.com/ksbirthequity)

Join KBEN

<https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=C7PAHM8W3P>

**KBEN**

Kansas Birth  
Equity Network





# REFERENCES

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# The Community in CCHI

**Michelle Edison, MPH, MS**  
CCHI Project Director,  
NICHQ



# Thinking BIG

## *CCHI Vision*



We envision a world where every community, filled with realized power, leads transformative efforts that achieve optimal health for families.



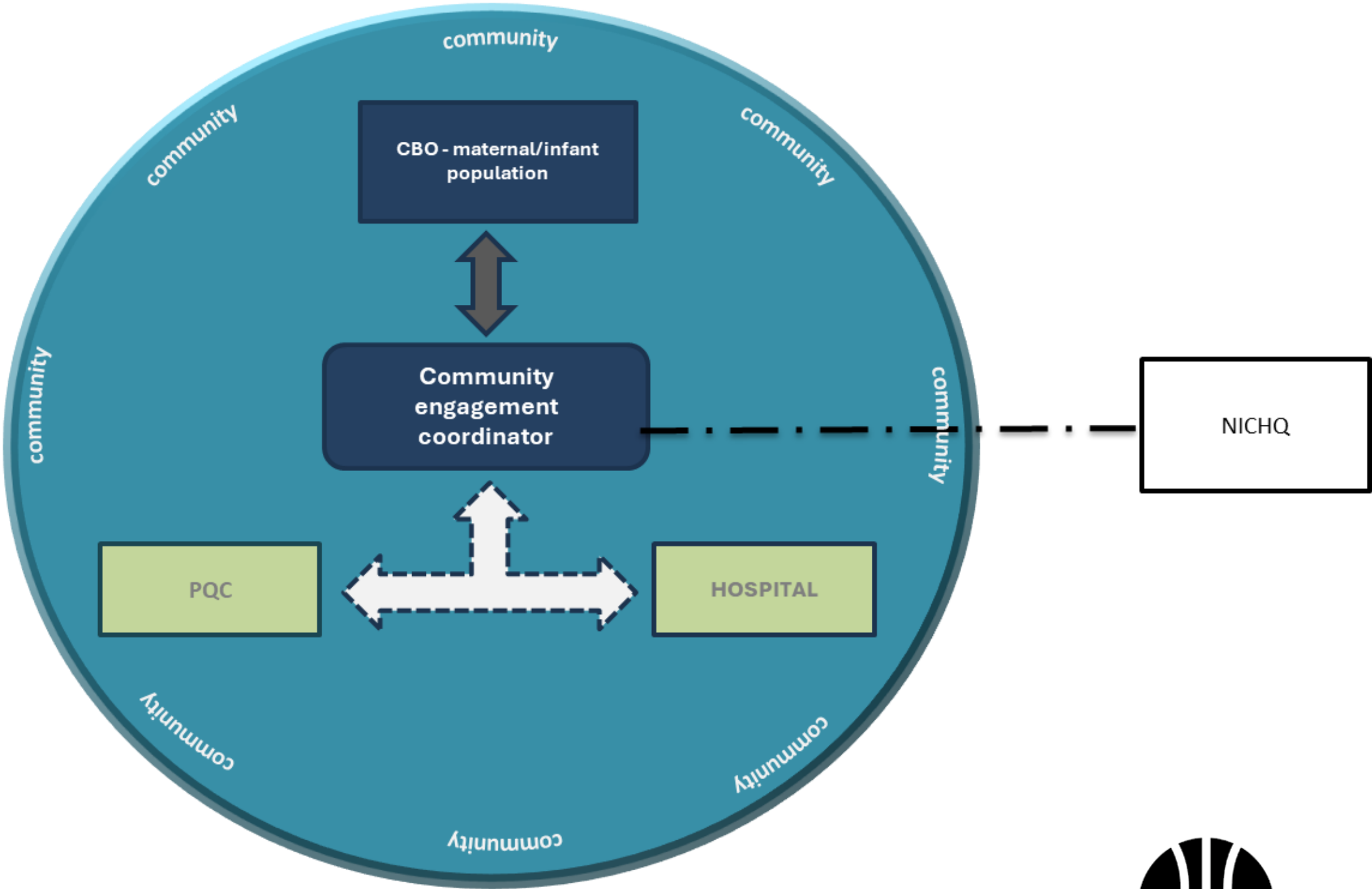
six dimensions



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# Framework-Communities Lead Collaborative Efforts







# The Community in CCHI

**Monica Stinson, MS, CHES**  
Program Manager,  
MS Perinatal Quality Collaborative





**MSPQC**  
Mississippi Perinatal Quality Collaborative

**POWER TO THE PEOPLE:**

“Centering Families to Transform  
Maternal & Infant Health”


Monica Stinson, MS, CHES  
Sr. Program Manager








# What is a Perinatal Quality Collaborative?

## History

 Perinatal Quality Collaboratives (PQCs) are state or multistate networks of teams.

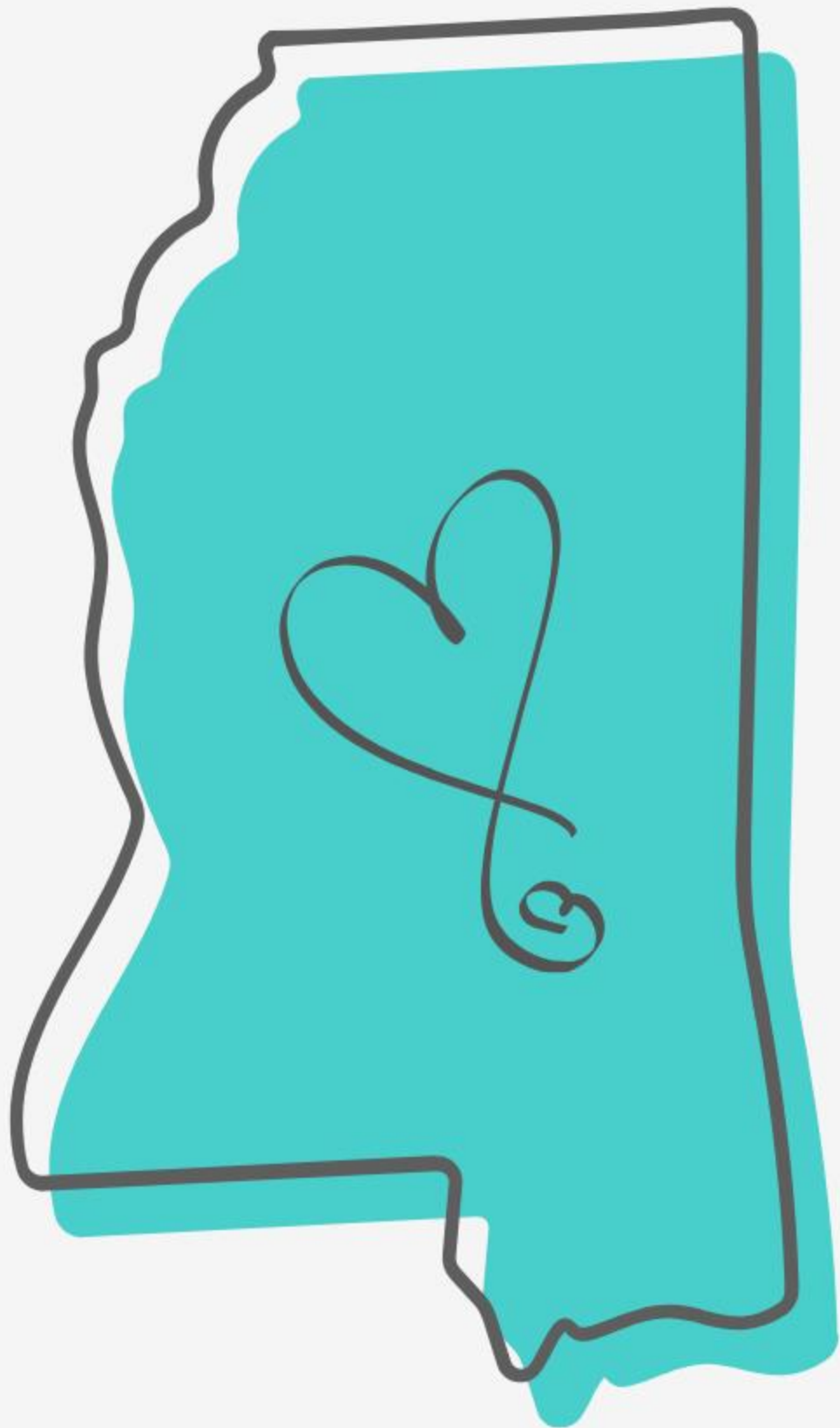
 They work to improve the quality of care for mothers and babies.

 PQCs contribute to important improvements in health care and outcomes for mothers and babies

 Most states currently have active collaboratives, and others are in development







# About the Mississippi Perinatal Quality Collaborative (MSPQC)

## ➤ The Beginning

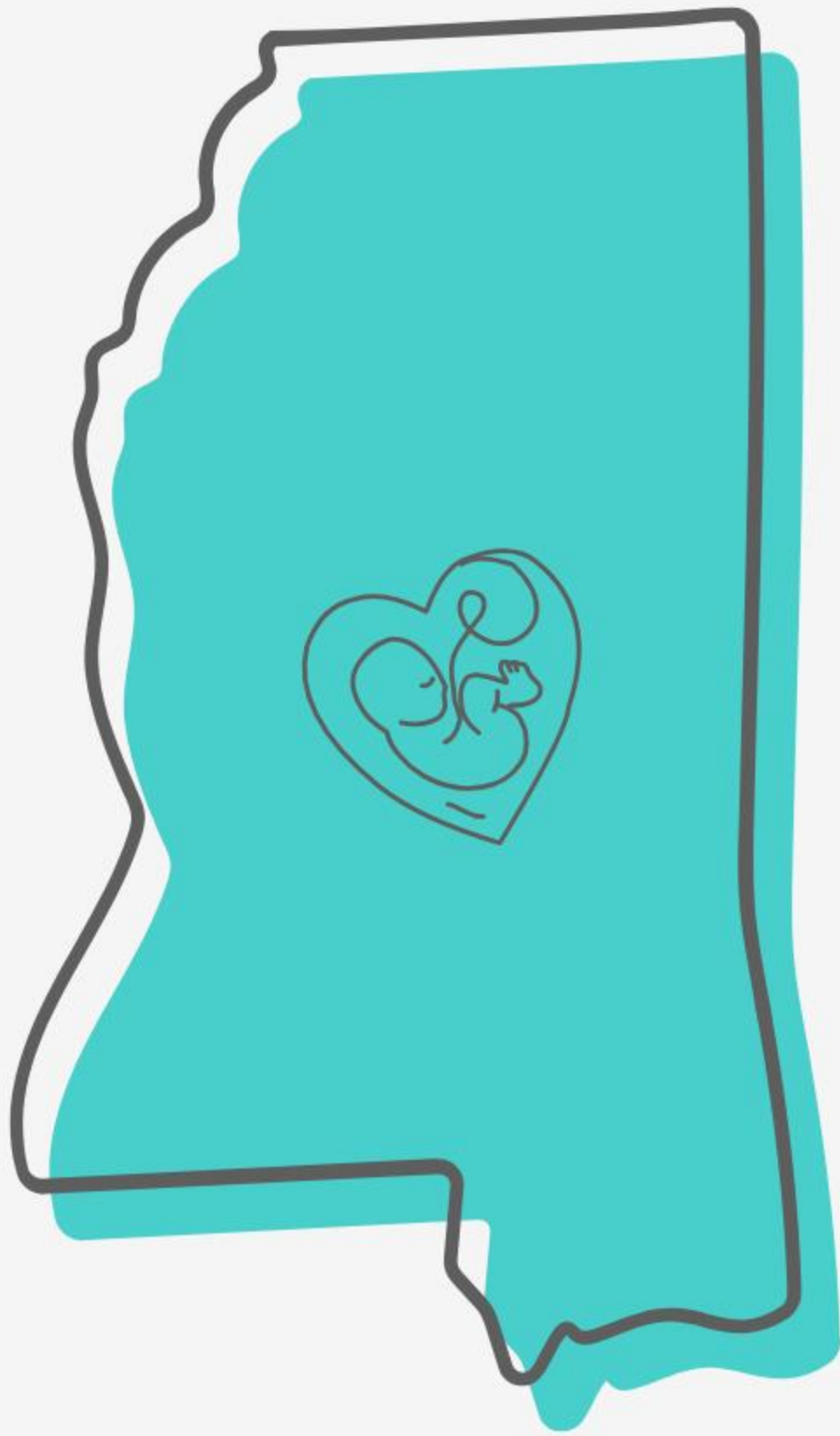
The MSPQC was started in 2014. The MSPQC serves as a cornerstone of statewide efforts to enhance maternal and infant health across Mississippi, fostering a powerful partnership between clinical teams, public health experts, hospitals, health departments, and families.

## ➤ Our Collaborative, Evidence-Based Approach:

To ensure comprehensive care, MSPQC's work is structured through three key divisions:

- **Maternal Division:** Focusing on best practices for mothers.
- **Neonatal Division:** Dedicated to improving outcomes for newborns.
- **Patient & Family Engagement:** We believe patient voices are paramount and are central to the care process.



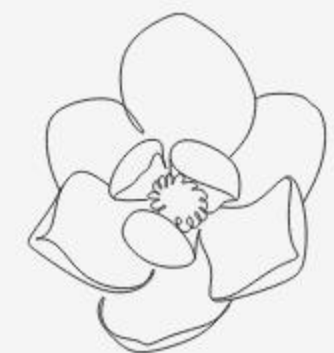


# About the Mississippi Perinatal Quality Collaborative (MSPQC)



## ► Our Collaborative, Evidence-Based Approach:

- Statewide initiative housed at Mississippi Public Health Institute (MSPHI)
- Utilizes a data-driven strategy to improve birth outcomes
- Implements quality improvement initiatives at the hospital and community level
- Emphasizes equity, hospital-community engagement, and quality improvement





# Centering Families for Impact



Families as  
key  
stakeholders  
in care design

Build trust  
through  
listening and  
collaboration

Share power  
across  
systems for  
better  
outcomes

Call to Action:  
Strengthen  
clinical-  
community  
linkages





# Collaboration with Six Dimensions

**Goal: Bridge clinical care with community outreach and education**

- Promote respectful, culturally-responsive care
- Use data and lived experience to inform change
- Storytelling, community engagement, provider education



six dimensions



# The Power of Collaboration

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Collaboration drives innovation and collective problem-solving

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Brings together diverse expertise from clinical, community, and policy sectors

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Strengthens trust and continuity of care for birthing families

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Increases sustainability and reach of maternal health interventions

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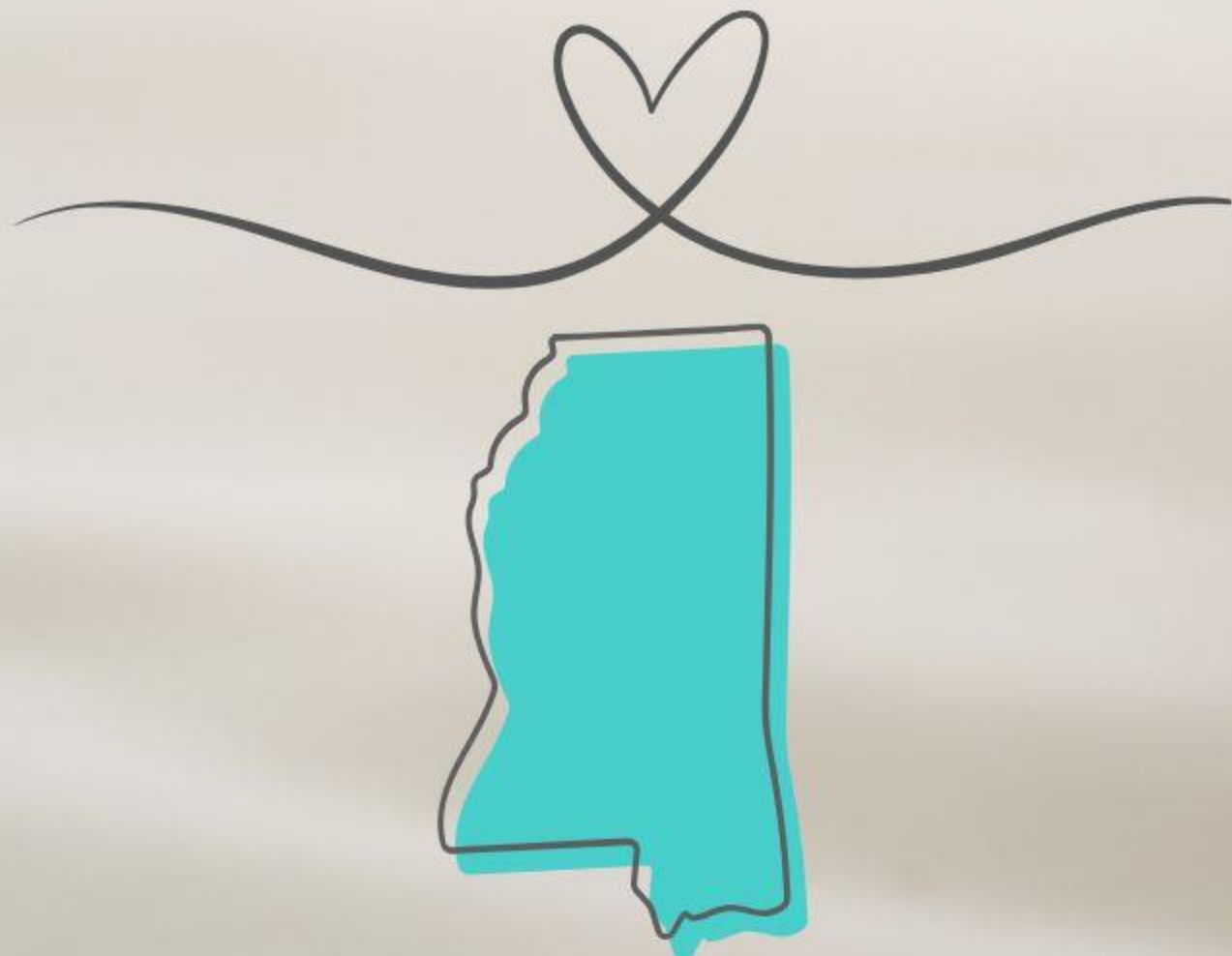
Shared goals, resources, and accountability lead to stronger, more equitable outcomes





# Improving Mississippi Birth Outcomes...

*The healthiest outcomes happen when clinical expertise meets community wisdom — together, we create care that is not only evidence-based, but human-centered!*





# *Thank You!*

***Monica Stinson, MS, CHES***

***Sr. Program Manager***

***Mississippi Perinatal Quality Collaborative***

***Email: [mstinson@msphi.org](mailto:mstinson@msphi.org)***

***Website: [www.mspqc.org](http://www.mspqc.org)***





# Audience Q&A

**Shalonda Coleman**  
CCHI Senior Project Manager,  
NICHQ





# **Call to Action: Enhancing Black Maternal Health Outcomes**

**Nakeitra L. Burse, DrPH, CHES**



# Final Remarks & Next Steps

- We'd love your feedback. Please complete the survey!
- Look out for the post-meeting email with slides, recording, and survey.

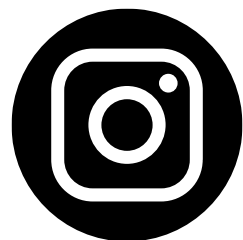




# Thank You

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## CONNECT WITH US



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