



Black Maternal Health Week 2025

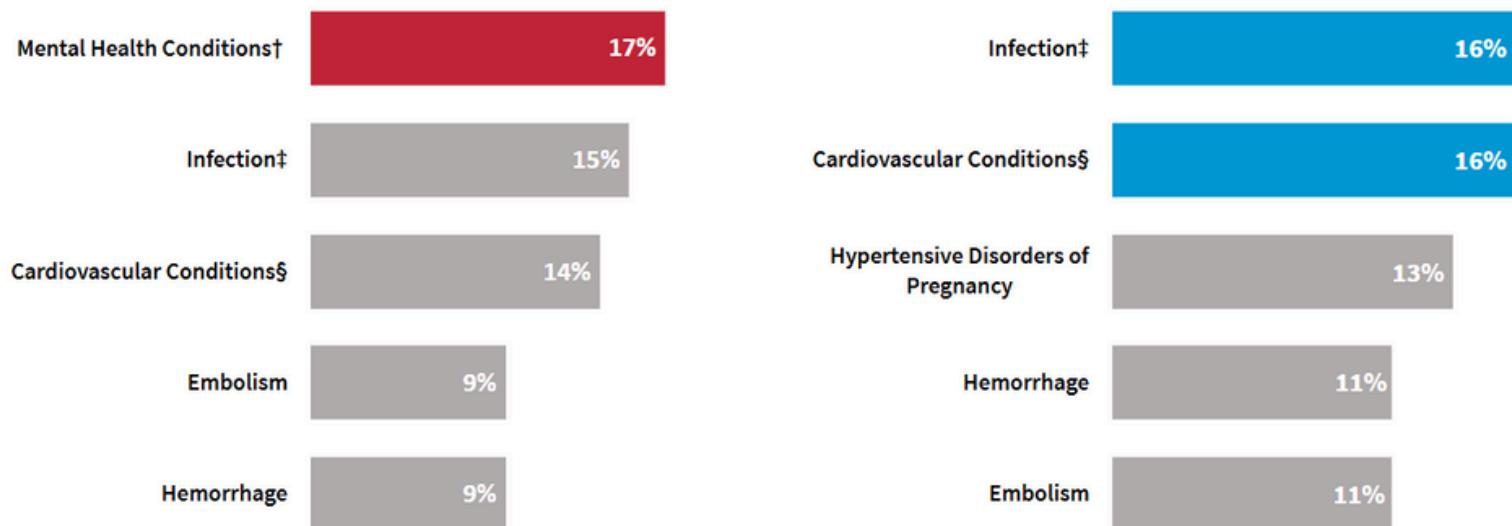
HONORING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) was founded by the [Black Mamas Matter Alliance \(BMMA\)](#) in 2018 to amplify the voices of Black mothers, highlight the maternal health crisis, and advocate for policies that improve birth outcomes. BMHW is recognized nationally and serves as a platform to bring attention to the systemic disparities affecting Black maternal health.

LEADING CAUSES OF PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS FOR BLACK WOMEN IN OHIO

As we recognize BMHW, it is crucial to highlight the disparities in maternal health outcomes. Data from 2008-2020 reveals that the leading causes of pregnancy-related deaths for non-Hispanic Black women in Ohio differ from overall trends, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions and systemic change.

Top 5 Leading Causes of Pregnancy Related Death in Ohio: Overall and Non-Hispanic Black Women (2008-2020)*



* 2019 data not included. To achieve more timely data and prioritize the review of deaths related to COVID-19, ODH and PAMR made the difficult decision not to review 2019 deaths.

† Mental health conditions include deaths due to substance use disorder/overdose, depression, anxiety disorder, and other psychiatric conditions.

‡ Includes COVID-19.

§ Excluding cardiomyopathy, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, and cerebrovascular accidents.

HOW OH-CAMH MEMBERS ARE ADDRESSING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH

OH-CAMH works to reduce preventable maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity by identifying gaps and developing strategies to improve maternal health outcomes. OH-CAMH members play a vital role in addressing Ohio's Black maternal health crisis by providing expert guidance on policies and planning, fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, promoting awareness of ongoing maternal health initiatives and resources across Ohio, and advocating for moms. The submissions below were contributed by OH-CAMH members to highlight initiatives and events focused on addressing Black maternal health in Ohio. They showcase efforts aimed at improving maternal health outcomes and advancing equity.

Quality Improvement Project: Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful, Equitable Maternity CARE Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative

In 2022, OH-CAMH conducted a community needs-based assessment which documented disparities in respectful care. To improve maternity care and address these gaps, the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and the [Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative](#) (OPQC) worked together to develop the [Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful, and Equitable Care Project \(CARE\)](#). The CARE Project aligns with the Joint Commission health equity standards: use of stratified [self-reported demographic data](#) to identify opportunities for improvement, use of that data along with patient and community feedback to develop action plans, and ensuring the assessment and response to health-related social needs. In collaboration with DCY and the Ohio Hospital Association, OPQC launched the CARE Learning Community with 13 maternity care sites across Ohio in October 2023. OPQC learned from those sites that it is essential to address health opportunities by developing an action plan using stratified data and patient/community feedback that can be monitored over time. OPQC launched the second year of the project in January 2025, continuing to learn from some of the initial sites and adding new maternity care teams to this initiative. Drs. Kamilah Dixon (The Ohio State University and Moms2B) and Kelly Gibson (Metro Health) along with Greg Braylock (ProMedica) provide helpful faculty guidance.

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Queens Village Canton

Queens Village Canton has hosted a variety of events to support and uplift women of color. Most recently, they hosted a Galentine's Brunch in February, featuring a waffle bar and mocktail mimosas for moms. The organization has also conducted four financial literacy workshops and a mental health wellness workshop to support women's overall well-being. Upcoming initiatives include a Pack'n Play and diaper distribution for mothers in need. Learn more by following Queens Village Canton on their social media platforms.

Instagram: [@queensvillagehof](#)

Facebook: [Queens Village Canton](#)

Contact: Monique Compton, Coordinator
Queensvillagecantonoh@gmail.com

Perinatal Mental Health Screening Protocol and Briefing: A Culturally Responsive Framework for Screening with Black Birthing Persons

Ohio Perinatal Mental Health Task Force

The Ohio Perinatal Mental Health Task Force (hosted and managed by the POEM Program of Mental Health America of Ohio) presents a Perinatal Mental Health Screening Protocol and Briefing to address the higher risk of perinatal depression and anxiety among Black birthing persons, who often face inadequate responsive care. The framework, developed by the Screening and Identification Strategic Area Action Team, is a collaborative effort with Black birthing people, Black birth workers, and perinatal service providers across Ohio. It is informed by literature reviews, focus groups, interviews, and expert guidance from Karen Sheffield-Abdullah, PhD, RN, CNM, along with the POEM Program. This project offers a full protocol and briefing, as well as a one-page resource for mental health screenings, all available free and publicly accessible for distribution.

Learn more about the POEM Program's Rise Initiative, a space for Black moms to rise above and receive support for perinatal mental health challenges.

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The Teen Queen Joy Series & Community-Based Doulas

Queens Village Columbus

The Teen Queen Joy Series is a transformative five-session program designed to empower Black teen girls by fostering joy, confidence, and holistic well-being. Running in the spring of 2025, this series offers culturally affirming workshops, mentorship, and creative expression opportunities, ensuring a safe space for teens to explore self-care, leadership, and community-building. A key focus is on supporting teens who are parenting or at risk of early parenting, equipping them with crucial knowledge and resources to make informed life choices. Purpose & Impact: Nurtures mental, emotional, and social health. Provides access to positive role models, supportive peer networks, and resources. Addresses health disparities affecting Black teen girls and their children. Strengthens leadership skills, emotional resilience, and community engagement. Improves maternal and child health outcomes by encouraging informed decision-making.

Queens Village Columbus launched The HealthConnect One Community-Based Doula Program in March 2025, focusing on training and replicating community-based doula services to support birthing families. Using a train-the-trainer model, the program prepares facilitators to provide direct training to doulas, emphasizing cultural competence and community-based support. It includes structured convening meetings, extensive training sessions, and a 20-session curriculum covering prenatal, labor and delivery, postpartum care, and breastfeeding.

Continued: The Teen Queen Joy Series & Community-Based Doulas Queens Village Columbus

Core Components & Benefits:

- Employs trusted community members as doulas.
- Extends support from early pregnancy through postpartum.
- Utilizes a participatory, experience-based learning model.
- Provides access to training materials via an online learning system.
- Strengthens maternal and infant health outcomes through culturally responsive care.

Both programs prioritize community-driven support and holistic well-being, with the Teen Queen Joy Series empowering Black teen girls as they transition into womanhood and the HealthConnect One Doula Program enhancing maternal and infant care.

Facebook: [Queens Village Columbus](#)

Instagram: [@queensvillage614](#)

Contact: Whitney R. Gordon, Program Manager
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ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHT: GROUNDWORK OHIO

Groundwork Ohio is a statewide nonpartisan advocacy and research organization focusing on issues that impact families from the prenatal period to age five. They have a vast network of stakeholders in all regions of the state, and strong connections to the Ohio Legislature - with whom they tirelessly elevate poorer pregnancy, birth, and health outcomes that Black mothers and young children face compared to other racial groups and educate policy makers on the policy priorities and investments that are known to move the needle to enhance health equity for Black families. It is currently Ohio's biennial budget season and Groundwork Ohio is thrilled to see a call for increased investments in infant vitality supports that focus on community-led, locally-based solutions that reduce the infant mortality crisis for Black babies. Groundwork Ohio leads early childhood advocacy and is proud to partner with so many important organizations and programs doing the direct work that supports Black women and families.

They have an active blog and a weekly newsletter that go out to nearly 10,000 stakeholders each week.

Groundwork Ohio is always willing to elevate programs and good work on their blog, newsletter, or social media platforms! If you have a project you'd like to share with them for highlight, contact Caitlin Feldman, Policy Director, at cfeldman@groundworkohio.org.

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK EVENTS

Queen's Village Columbus: Rooted in Wellness: Potting Seeds of Love, Resilience, and Essential Oils

Date: April 9, 2025

Location: Barnett Recreation Center, Columbus, OH

A two-hour interactive experience embracing the healing power of nature and essential oils. Participants will pot their own plants as a symbol of self-care, learn how to blend essential oils, and engage in discussions on wellness, resilience, and community building.

Queens Village Canton: Social Media Highlights

Queens Village Canton will be sharing posts and reels on their social media pages throughout Black Maternal Health Week, highlighting key issues, community resources, and celebrations of Black maternal health.

- Instagram: [@queensvillagehof](https://www.instagram.com/@queensvillagehof)
- Facebook: [Queens Village Canton](https://www.facebook.com/Queens-Village-Canton-100000000000000)

THE MOMI STUDY AT OHIO STATE – RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY FOR PREGNANT INDIVIDUALS

The Ohio State University (OSU) is committed to providing the best possible care to moms and infants. OSU conducts research to find new and better ways to provide the best care. An example of this research is the MOMI Study, which is testing two different models of primary care during the year after childbirth. The research team is working with the OH-CAMH to identify individuals who may qualify, with more information provided below.

YOU MAY QUALIFY if you're currently pregnant – AND – you've ever had high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, or anxiety, including during pregnancy.

IF YOU PARTICIPATE, you'll be randomly assigned to one of two models of primary care after childbirth and can choose from Ohio State locations and providers that deliver that model of care. Providers at all locations can help you manage your health. But the models differ in several ways, including how patients are scheduled, how healthcare providers communicate, how health histories inform care, and how referrals are made.

The Ohio State University will assist you in scheduling your care, and you'll complete three study visits with surveys, several measurements, and blood and hair sampling. They'll collect cord blood and review medical records. Together, all this information will help them understand your health and the health of your infant.

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE up to \$150 and several small gifts.

TO LEARN MORE, visit <https://go.osu.edu/momi> or reach out to our research team at momistudy@osu.edu or 1-614- 427-2785.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, see if you qualify by answering several questions at <https://go.osu.edu/momi-do-i-qualify>.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED, please feel free to pass along our information.

Contact: Ana Wong, RN, Clinical Research Nurse
wong.513@osu.edu

Compelling Clicks

Empowering Maternal Health: A Toolkit for Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring

Support improved maternal health outcomes with the Self-Measured Blood Pressure Organizational Toolkit from March of Dimes. This resource equips healthcare providers and organizations with the tools needed to implement and enhance self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) programs, helping to prevent and manage hypertensive disorders in pregnancy. Explore best practices, workflow recommendations, and implementation strategies to drive better health for birthing women.

Perinatal Mental Health: A Guide to Compassionate Care

Ohio Perinatal Mental Health Task Force, managed by POEM of Mental Health America Ohio, is offering FREE virtual training sessions. This training was designed for any Ohio provider involved in the care of moms and birthing persons. Learn essential skills to screen and care for perinatal mental health complications through a framework of compassion and cultural responsiveness.

Key Topics Covered:

- Perinatal mental health, substance use, and care inequities
- Caring and inclusive screening strategies
- Collaborative care and referral practices

Use the drop-down menu to register for one of the 4 available sessions.

- Friday, April 11th, 10-11:30A
- Friday, April 25th, 10-11:30A
- Friday, May 16th, 10-11:30A
- Friday, May 30th, 10-11:30A

**A continuing education application has been submitted to the appropriate state licensing boards. Feel free to reach out to POEM Education Manager, Raquel Williams at rwilliams@mhaohio.org with any questions.*

Link to register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/8QK1DLDPRfjqKJQQhWnRmw#/registration>

2020 Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Report: Insights and Actions to Prevent Maternal Deaths in Ohio

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and DCY express gratitude to those who have contributed to and supported the vital work of the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review (PAMR) Committee. With a mission to review all pregnancy-associated deaths in Ohio, as well as develop recommendations for the prevention of maternal deaths, we thank committee members for closely reviewing each death and their devotion to thoughtfully constructing recommendations to prevent future deaths. We extend our gratitude to those who are implementing PAMR recommendations in their communities. With deep respect and reverence, we dedicate this report to the memory of the 130 women who died of pregnancy-associated deaths in 2020 and their loved ones.

For more information please reach out to Hallie.Kerr@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov.

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Article: Disparities in Maternal Mental Health: A Rising Public Health Issue

The Center for Community Solutions

The Center for Community Solutions has written several articles highlighting the maternal mental health crisis in Ohio. One of the articles—“[Disparities in maternal mental health: a rising public health issue](#)” written by Natasha Takyi-Micah—is about maternal mental health and how it impacts BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) communities. In this article we highlighted statistics about maternal mental health among Black birthing parents, the reasons behind the crisis, and ways to address it.

Black Maternal Health Week 2025 Toolkit: Empowering Communities for Advocacy and Action

The Black Mamas Matter Alliance has released the 2025 Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW25) Toolkit, designed to support individuals and organizations in raising awareness, fostering activism, and building community during the annual Black Maternal Health Week from April 11-17. This comprehensive resource offers messaging guidance, sample social media content, shareable graphics, and a schedule of national digital activities. It aims to amplify the voices and experiences of Black mothers and birthing people, emphasizing culturally congruent practices and evidence-based solutions to address maternal health disparities.