



Mamas 4 Life

Doulas and Midwives

Supporting Healthy Births

BEACON
PUBLIC HEALTH





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Spinner, MPH, CHES

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Note from the Founder

Bringing life into the world is one of the most beautiful things. It is an unfortunate tragedy that some mothers don't make it home to raise their babies. The United States is one of the most dangerous places to give birth compared to other high-income countries. Maternal mortality rates are on the rise and Black mothers in particular are carrying the burden. Over 60% of maternal deaths are preventable. These data are troubling and heartbreaking, which is why we want to bring attention to this problem, and more importantly share solutions.

We want to continue the important conversation about what's needed to support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) mothers so they can go home with their babies.



There are many root causes contributing to maternal deaths, such as the social determinants of health- the conditions in which we are born, work, play, grow, and worship. Other systemic issues include racism and discrimination, physician's implicit biases leading to BIPOC mothers not being heard or valued during their birthing experience.

One key strategy to combat maternal deaths is using doulas and midwives to provide support. While they each have different roles, they can both provide much needed support and medical care in the case of midwives to help close the health disparities gap, and improve maternal health outcomes.

This campaign is one of many resources available to mothers, family members, public health practitioners, and medical professionals to educate and stimulate much-needed conversation around maternal health. It is my hope that this campaign brings attention to the maternal health crisis in America and we start to reverse this trend. Every child deserves a mother to raise them!

J. Spinner





BACKGROUND

Did you know that over 60% of maternal deaths are preventable? According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women have the highest rates of maternal deaths: For every 100,000 births: 41.4 Black women, 26.5 American Indian/Alaska Native and 14.1 Asian/Pacific Islander mothers die compared to 13.7 Whites and 11.2 Hispanics. The primary reason for these tragic statistics is that most Black women are not heard or valued during their birthing experiences. Their symptoms often go unchecked and undiagnosed— leading to complications and untimely death.

As a vision to create healthy and whole communities, Beacon Public Health created the Mamas 4 Life maternal health education campaign to raise awareness about maternal health disparities, complications, and various strategies to address this health issue. Furthermore, this campaign focuses on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) mothers, because they have higher rates of maternal deaths in comparison to white women. As part of this campaign, we created a toolkit with messaging to increase awareness of maternal mortality of BIPOC mothers, the utility of creating birth plans, as well as information about doulas and midwives, including their role in supporting mothers to deliver healthy babies.





About Beacon Public Health

Beacon Public Health is a minority, women-owned consulting group focused on health equity—to ensure Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities can live healthy and whole lives. Our vision is to create healthy and whole communities by diminishing the impact of chronic diseases.

We do our work by collaboratively working with our clients to:

- Educate communities on chronic disease risk factors, disease management, and healthy lifestyles.
- Design, implement, and evaluate equity-driven sustainable public health programming.
- Create dynamic, culturally tailored health education communications to support healthy decision-making.
- Support the public health workforce through professional development training and coaching to advance skill sets.
- Build organizational capacity by providing technical assistance to support the organization's ability to effectively develop and implement strategic, yet sustainable public health program planning that aims to reduce health disparities.

For more information about Beacon Public Health or to schedule an introductory call, visit: www.beaconpublichealth.com





Overview of Toolkit Materials

This toolkit contains key messages and talking points to help facilitate conversations about the important role that doulas and midwives play in supporting equitable birth outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). There are also social media graphics that can be downloaded to amplify the key messages, along with educational resources that can be used by mothers, family members, public health and medical professionals, and others who want to get engaged.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to raise awareness and educate about maternal health disparities. You can use the toolkit in various ways including:

- Start the conversation—promote campaign messages on your social media.
 - Use our digital downloads on any of your social media channels to help raise awareness.
 - Use the hashtag #Mamas4Life
- Tag @BeaconPublicHealth to help increase the reach of the campaign so others can access our resources.
- Stay connected & follow us on social media



[@BeaconPubHlth](https://twitter.com/BeaconPubHlth)



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



www.linkedin.com/company/beacon-public-health/



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

SOCIAL MEDIA

Use these hashtags to get the conversation started on social media.

Branded hashtag: #Mamas4Life

Secondary hashtag: #MaternalHealth #MaternalHealthMonth

#DoulasAndMidwives #HealthEquity #Pregnancy #BIPOCCommunities

#BIPOCMommas



Campaign Materials

Live Event/Webinar

This webinar aims to bring awareness to maternal health by highlighting the work and support that both doulas and midwives provide to mom and baby to improve health outcomes, especially their impact to improve maternal health outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Watch the replay here: www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life

Panelists



Lauren Agyekum, Nurse Midwife

Lauren Agyekum is a dual-certified Nurse Midwife and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner. She is also the owner of Birthing With Confidence, LLC which is a platform focused on providing perinatal education to the community.



Kayla L. Harley, Doula

Kayla is an International Wellness Practitioner, Optimal Breathologist and GYROTONIC®/GYROKINESIS® Trainer – who believes firmly that the body has the power to heal itself through actively listening and the right care and support. Kayla is a Full Spectrum Doula that takes a mom-centered approach to providing holistic care one of which empowers mothers to be vocal and self-advocate.



William C. Moore, Doula & Lactation Educator

William works in Child and Maternal Health as a Doula and Lactation Educator who addresses disparities in the Maternal Death Rate and disparities in the Infant Mortality Rate. William was profiled in 101 Careers in Public Health and is the first male doula in the history of the state of Minnesota. He has a consulting firm focusing on showing direct service providers how to include more men in the birth process to aid in the decline of the aforementioned disparities as well as helping families successfully co-parent to ensure their children hit all their early childhood milestones.



Pansy Tayo, Certified Birth Doula

Pansy Tayo is a Certified Birth Doula, Certified Birth Assistant, Childbirth Educator, Placenta Encapsulation Specialist, Certified Naturopathic & Maternity Reiki Practitioner, Certified Sacred Pregnancy Retreat Facilitator, Sacred Space Creator, and Spiritual Ritualist. Owner and Operator of The Sacred Pause Red Room In Reisterstown, Md. Pansy is known as the mother to mothers, and birthing persons bringing divine love, support, and healing through each stage of life.



Campaign Materials

Socia Media Posts

These posts are downloadable and shareable.

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Message 1: Campaign Overview
The #Mamas4Life maternal health campaign aims to increase awareness about the role of doulas and midwives in supporting healthy birth outcomes and decreasing maternal health disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) mothers.

To learn more visit:
www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life

Message 2: Catch the replay of the Doulas and Midwives maternal health webinar. The webinar featured a dynamic panel of doulas and midwives sharing their experiences, breaking down myths, and raising awareness about what it means to be a birth worker and supporting #BIPOC mothers.

Watch the webinar here:
www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life



Click [here](#) for downloadable social media campaign graphics.



Campaign Materials

Socia Media Posts

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MATERNAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

Message 3: Maternal Health Disparities

#DYK that BIPOC mothers die 3 to 4 times the rate of their white counterparts. The #Mamas4Life campaign raises awareness about the #BIPOC maternal mortality crisis in the US. You can help by sharing resources to help educate others to help reduce these disparities.



Message 4: Racial/ethnic inequalities have contributed to non-Hispanic Black women being 3 to 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes.

Data show that BIPOC birthing people are 3 to 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes even though 60% of maternal deaths are preventable. Here are the top 5 most common causes of maternal deaths:

- Hemorrhage
- Infection
- High blood pressure during pregnancy
- Complications from delivery
- Unsafe abortions

To learn more: visit <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>



Click [here](#) for downloadable social media campaign graphics.



AWARENESS

Message 5: Bringing awareness to Black maternal health is important. In 2021, for every 100,000 births, almost 70 Black women died compared to almost 27 white women. The overall rate is about 33 deaths per 100,000 births.

For more information: www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life



BIRTHING PLANS

Message 6: Birth plans are a way to communicate your wants, needs, and preferences surrounding childbirth. Using a birth plan supports mothers to make and document their decisions.

Birth plans can be a letter to your caregiver, or a checklist of what you want and need, as well as what you want to avoid.

Download a copy of a birth plan to get started.



Click [here](#) for downloadable social media campaign graphics.



DOULAS & MIDWIVES

Message 7:

Do you know the roles of a doula and a midwife? How about their similarities or differences?

While having different roles in the birthing experience, both work together to ensure the well-being of both mother and baby.

For more information visit www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life



Message 8: Did you know that doulas and midwives offer support to mothers before, during, and after pregnancy?

For more information visit www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life



Click [here](#) for downloadable social media campaign graphics.



DOULAS & MIDWIVES

Message 9: Doulas are trained individuals who provide social, emotional and physical support to mothers during their pregnancy.

For more information visit www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life

Maternal Health

www.beaconpublichealth.com



Doulas are trained professionals who provide physical & emotional support to women before and after childbirth.



Maternal Health

www.beaconpublichealth.com



Common services that **doulas** provide:

- + provide comfort during labor (relaxation, breathing, and movement)
- + offer encouragement, advice, and comfort
- + advocate for the mother
- + navigate postpartum challenges
- + help create a birthing plan



Message 10:

Midwives are trained healthcare professionals that provide clinical care and support to mothers before, during, and after pregnancy.

For more information visit www.beaconpublichealth.com/mamas4life

Maternal Health

www.beaconpublichealth.com



Midwives are trained health care professionals that provide clinical care and support for mothers before, during, and after pregnancy.



Maternal Health

www.beaconpublichealth.com



Common services that **midwives** provide:

- + clinical exams and screening
- + prenatal and postpartum care
- + monitor mother and baby during labor
- + manage birthing complications (if they arise)
- + deliver newborn and placenta
- + teach new mothers how to care for and feed their newborns



Click [here](#) for downloadable social media campaign graphics.



Blogs

BIPOC Maternal Mortality Crisis

The blog brings attention to the maternal mortality crisis of the BIPOC community while also emphasizing that most maternal deaths are preventable. A key to preventing maternal deaths is through education, diversifying the workforce, and policy and advocacy.



Click [here](#) for downloadable blog content.

Supportive Birthing Experience

Doulas and midwives, also sometimes referred to as birthing advocates, are effective to help combat BIPOC maternal mortality. The blog highlights the similarities and key differences in their roles in supporting both mom and baby.



Click [here](#) for downloadable blog content.





Key Messages and Facts

KEY FACTS

Key Message #1: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) women are four times more at risk of maternal death compared to their White Counterparts.

- Over 60% of maternal deaths can be prevented, including a majority that occur in the postpartum period by recognizing the signs and symptoms for mothers to receive accurate, quality care quickly.
- Racial and ethnic inequities are troubling and most notably among non-Hispanic Black women who are 3 to 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes in comparison to their White counterparts.
- The leading causes of pregnancy-related death include hemorrhage, infection, amniotic fluid embolism, thrombotic pulmonary or other embolism, hypertensive disorder of pregnancy, anesthesia complications, cerebrovascular accidents, cardiac conditions, and other non-cardiovascular medical conditions.



Key Message #1: (continued)

- Risk factors for maternal deaths include advanced maternal age (over age 35), lack of prenatal care, lower levels of educational attainment, and low socioeconomic status. Timely access to prenatal care is associated with reduced risk of maternal death and the lack thereof is associated with increased risk of maternal death.
- Inequities are a large part of the current statistics which are due to persistent and systematic failures in our communities and health systems.
- Racism, classism, and gender oppression are the root of unequal health outcomes – as well as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, play and age (also known as social determinants of health).

Key Message #2: Developing a birthing plan can provide BIPOC mothers have a way to communicate their preferences and birthing goals before, during, and after labor.

- Mothers should be at the center of decision-making during their pregnancy and birth.
- Birthing plans serve as a vehicle for mothers to communicate their childbirth preferences and birthing goals before, during, and after labor.
- Birth plans can include the desire for pain medication, type of birth (e.g., natural birth), birthing location (e.g., birthing center or hospital), and who the mother wants during the birth, among other key factors that are important for the mother.
- Mothers who are actively engaged in their childbirth decision-making, are treated with respect and compassion, and receive good support during labor have been shown to positively influence their satisfaction with their birthing experience.



Key Message #3: Doulas and midwives are effective in improving birthing outcomes.

While they may have different roles, doulas and midwives both provide patient support and advocate for the mother's wishes during and after birth to improve birth outcomes.

Doulas:

- Doulas are trained and experienced lay persons who provide social, emotional, and practical support to mothers during their pregnancy and/or after birth. They don't provide clinical care.
- Their role may include protecting the mother's emotional well-being and holding the space for birth through emotional and physical intimacy.
- Hospital and community doula models have been developed primarily to serve disadvantaged women who are disproportionately likely to access maternal care late and to experience poor outcomes.

Midwives:

- Midwives are trained healthcare professionals that provide care and support before, during, and after labor.
- They conduct physical examinations; prescribe medications; admit, manage, and discharge patients; order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic testing.
- They promote, protect, and support the mother's human, reproductive, and sexual health, and rights with respect to the mother's ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Increasing access to midwifery care, especially in under-resourced areas, reduces interventions that contribute to the risk of maternal mortality in initial and subsequent pregnancies, lower healthcare costs, and potentially improves the health of mothers and babies.



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