

CHA RECOGNIZES BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

CHA Highlights Provider Training Opportunities and Calls for Continued Efforts to Address Upstream, Root Cause Drivers of Maternal Health

WALLINGFORD – The **Connecticut Hospital Association** is joining advocates across the state and nation in raising awareness for **Black Maternal Health Week**, which takes place annually from April 11-17.

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. The United Nations also recognizes April 11 as the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights.

“Across the country there has been a steady rise in maternal mortality and morbidity, with recent data showing this has been exacerbated by the pandemic and a higher likelihood of Black and Medicaid populations experiencing a severe maternal morbidity condition compared to white pregnant women,” said **Selina Osei, MD, MPH, MBA the Director of Health Equity and Community Engagement at the Connecticut Hospital Association**. “Black Maternal Health Week is a time to raise awareness and focus on expanding the work being done in and beyond healthcare settings by continuing to build partnerships with community stakeholders to address upstream root cause drivers of maternal health such as economic inequality and racism.”

“CHA is sharing the following resources to continue building on the efforts of Connecticut hospitals and health systems to address disparities in maternal health. The following includes opportunities for healthcare providers to participate in implicit bias trainings, resources on the importance of education surrounding intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy and the postpartum period, and details on the work under way to better understand implicit bias in healthcare and lead to better health outcomes,” said **Megan Smith, DrPH, MPH, the Senior Director of Community Health Transformation at the Connecticut Hospital Association**. “CHA is also urging Connecticut policymakers to continue supporting efforts to improve care delivery and to address social drivers of health with strategies such as universal home visiting, the use of doulas to support maternal care, and lactation support,” said Smith.

FACTS:

- In 2021, 1,205 women died of maternal causes in the United States compared with 861 in 2020 and 754 in 2019. The rate of deaths for non-Hispanic Black women was 2.6 times the rate for non-Hispanic white women
- The maternal mortality rate for 2021 was 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with a rate of 23.8 in 2020 and 20.1 in 2019
- In 2021, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.6 times the rate for non-Hispanic White women
- *Above data from the CDC. Learn more [here](#)*

RESOURCES AND ACTION:

- **SPEAK UP Program Trainings**

The SPEAK UP Champion™ Implicit and Explicit Racial Bias education is training available for healthcare providers in Connecticut. The education program outlines strategies to help individuals and groups dismantle racism, provide quality equitable care, and reduce perinatal health disparities. The education is provided via a live virtual interactive format. This training is available to Connecticut healthcare providers from CHA member hospitals as part of CHA's partnership with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Parents Recovering from Opioids Use Disorder (PROUD) funding.

Learn more [here](#). Register to participate in provider training [here](#).

- **Intimate Partner Violence Education and Partnerships**

The Connecticut Maternal Mortality Review Committee, of which CHA is a member, recognizes interpersonal violence as a large driver of maternal mortality. The Committee [found](#) that of the 80 pregnancy-associated deaths in Connecticut between 2015 and 2020, 15 of those persons experienced intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. Moreover, IPV contributed to at least three deaths.

According to a March 2023 report from the [United Hospital Fund](#), Black women were nine times as likely to be killed by guns as white women and 4.5 times as likely as Hispanic women. When a gun is involved, domestic violence is five times more likely to result in death. More than half of all women killed by a firearm were victims of intimate partner violence. And, women who are Black are 3 times more likely to be killed by a firearm than women who are white, based on the annual fatality rate. Learn more [here](#).

CHA supports the Connecticut Maternal Mortality Review Committee's recommendations on the importance of education about IPV to every patient including educating patients on [CT Safe Connect](#) (Connecticut's domestic violence resource hub run by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence), promoting education to healthcare providers, and collaboration with IPV advocates to bridge hospitals and interpersonal violence community based organizations and resources. Learn more [here](#).

- **Reproductive Justice Alliance**

CHA is a member of the [Connecticut Reproductive Justice Alliance](#) which is working with community partners, the March of Dimes, and the Department of Public Health to conduct community based focus groups on the experience of birthing persons with attention on Black and brown individuals' experience engaging with the healthcare system. The goals of the Alliance are to better understand experience with implicit bias in healthcare. Learn more [here](#).

- **Further Support**

CHA supports multiple components of legislation proposed in the Connecticut General Assembly this year including the certification of doulas, the expansion of universal home visiting services to advance maternal and child health, and the creation of a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Committee. CHA looks forward to working with policymakers to ensure these policies advance in ways that best protect patients and deliver the quality care that patients need.

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