

20 ANNUAL REPORT 24



TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



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Leading with Vision

Inspiring Success

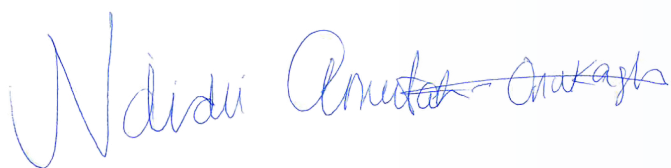
Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the progress we have made in advancing the health and well-being of Black and Brown mothers. Your support has amplified voices, challenged inequities, and paved the way for a brighter future. I am honored to share our 2024 Annual Report—a testament to collective action and the resilience of the communities we serve.

This year, we centered the lived experiences of Black mothers, whose stories fuel our determination to dismantle systemic barriers in maternal health. Key milestones include our role in passing Massachusetts legislation H.4999, expanding access to midwifery care, doulas, and mental health resources; distributing Nurture Kits to families in need; and hosting one of the nation's largest Black Maternal Health conferences. Together, we are working to ensure safe, dignified care for all mothers.

Addressing implicit biases within healthcare is complex, but the solution is clear: When we center Black women, everyone benefits. This truth drives our mission forward as we look to deepen our impact in 2024.

Thank you for your unwavering support. Your passion and dedication are the driving forces behind every milestone. Together, we are not just imagining change—we are creating it. Let's continue this journey to transform maternal health, one family and one community at a time.

With gratitude and hope,



Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, PhD, MPH, CHES
Director





Our Vision

To be a catalyst for maternal health research, policy, and workforce advancement through cross-disciplinary partnerships, thought leadership, and community engagement.

Our Mission

We believe in equity for all Black mothers before, during, and after pregnancy.

We believe in safe, joyful, and equitable births across the life course.

Unit Leads

THE INCREDIBLE PEOPLE BEHIND OUR CENTER UNITS



NINA ASHFORD
DRPH, MPH

Maternal and Child Health
Policy Advisor



SUNDÉ W. DANIELS
MBA, CLC

Managing Director, Education &
Training Unit Lead



LINDA HUDSON
SCD, MSPH, SCM

Community Engaged Research
Unit Lead



SHIKHAR SHRESTHA
PHD

Maternal and Child Health
Epidemiological Data Unit Lead



CANDACE STEWART
MPH

MOTHER Lab
Unit Lead

Center Unit Overviews

MOTHER Lab

The MOTHERLab is the largest research lab in the nation, training the next generation of maternal health scholars, clinicians, birth workers, and advocates. Led by students, public health practitioners, and others who are passionate about equitable maternal health, this unit supports research, policy and workforce development training of the Center.

Community Engaged Research Unit

The Community Engaged Research Unit supports collaborative partnerships within the community to ensure optimal maternal health outcomes. These collaborative partnerships include birthing families, doulas, hospital staff, healthcare professionals, and other academics from research institutions whose interests align with the Center.

Maternal and Child Health Policy Unit

The Maternal and Child Health Policy Unit supports the evaluation of Maternal and Child Health Laws and policies to challenge and eradicate health disparities in Black Maternal Healthcare. This unit aims to analyze policy initiative and annually propose new policies that support Black birthing during pre-birth, birth, and postpartum periods. This unit also builds and maintains alliances with strategic health policy leaders at local, state, and national levels.

Epidemiology and Data Synthesis Unit

The Epidemiology and Data Synthesis Unit focuses on operationalizing the skill-building objective through an initial springboard grant application for educational activities within The Center. The unit researches birth outcomes using a nationally representative database.

Education & Training Unit

The Education and Training unit serves as a workforce training experience for students, public health professionals, doulas, and clinicians with a passion for addressing inequities in Black Maternal Health. The primary focus is facilitating education and training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism for developing health practitioners and students.

Research Development and Grants Unit

The Research Development and Grants Unit focuses on research and development strategies by prioritizing research agendas, grants and scientific developments for all units within the organization.

Administrative Team



**JUDITH JEANTY
MPH**

Event Coordinator/
Project Manager



**ALYSHA
NOEL**

Senior Administrative
Coordinator



**HEATHER OLDEN
DRPH, MPH**

Post Doctorate
Research Fellow



**JENNIFER CHAPPLE
INGRAM**

Communications
Specialist



**FARIDA N. YADA
PHD, MPH**

Post Doctorate
Research Fellow



**LEIGHA MILLS
MPH**

MOTHER Lab
Program Administrator



CENTER HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Federal Appointment Four-Year Term

Dr. Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, director of the Center for Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice and the Julia A. Okoro Professor of Black Maternal Health at Tufts University School of Medicine, was appointed to the federal Advisory Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality (ACIMM), administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration, for a four-year term.

As a member of the ACIMM, Dr. Amutah-Onukagha will be part of a diverse group of experts—community members, researchers, clinicians, providers, and public health professionals—who advise the Secretary of Health and Human Services on partnerships, policies, and programs to reduce infant and maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity (SMM), and improve the health of infants and women before, during, and after pregnancy.



Massachusetts Maternal Health Momnibus Package H.4999 Signed Into Law

In a momentous victory for maternal health, the signing of the Maternal Health Momnibus Bill H.4999 into law marks a significant turning point in the fight for equitable healthcare. This legislation, years in the making, is a testament to the relentless advocacy of communities, activists, and lawmakers who have championed the cause of maternal health justice.

With the passing of this bill, Massachusetts families now have unprecedented access to midwifery care, doula support, and perinatal mental health services. The law also provides new regulations to increase freestanding birth centers. This is not just a win for Black mothers and babies—it's a victory for all families, ensuring that every birthing experience is safe, supportive, and equitable.



“This landmark legislation, more than two years in the making, designates Massachusetts as the blueprint for other states to model. It is the first step in ensuring quality, equitable, and respectful care in childbirth.”

Epidemiology & Data Unit

Research & Data

The Epidemiology and Data Synthesis Unit focused on obtaining grant funding for current and upcoming research.

Among this year's successes were:

- Applied and Received APHA Data Science Demonstration Grant: Using Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing to Identify Opioid-Related Incidents from Patient Care Reports in EMS Data
- Received NIH/NIDA R21 Grant: Examining Xylazine Associated Skin and Soft Tissue Infection
- SAMHSA Grant Application with Institute for Health and Recovery Inc (for Program Evaluation)



Community Engagement & Research

The Community Engagement and Research Unit experienced substantial growth, filling its Community Advisory Board with a cross-section of diverse stakeholders, including community members, healthcare professionals, and advocates, to collaborate on strategies that promote equitable maternal health outcomes. Priorities for these relationships include impacting birthing workforce development, assessing the maternal health landscape inclusive of providers, women of childbearing age, patients and their social support networks, and the development of frameworks to explain and improve current trends in maternal health outcomes.

Added to its list of successes, this unit also presented at State Representative Marjorie Decker's Community Briefing on Maternal Health.



Impact:

By the Numbers

This year, our reach and influence grew significantly, from our social media followers engaging with our mission, to publications advancing critical conversations, and resources shared to empower Black and Brown families. These numbers reflect the tangible difference we're making together.

↑ **500K**

Social Media Impressions

↑ **10**

Publications & Book Chapters

↑ **50+**

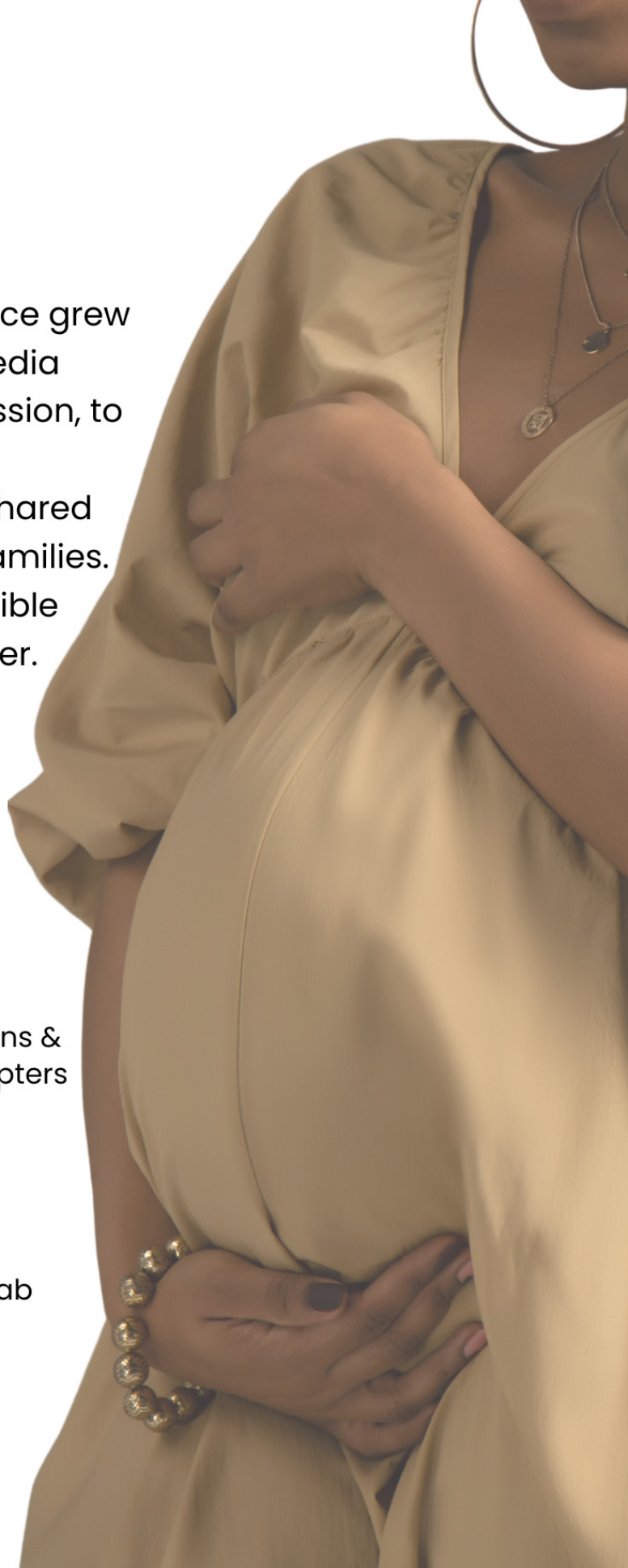
Media & Speaking Engagements

↑ **30**

MOTHER Lab Members

↑ **15K**

Followers Across Channels





MOTHER Lab (Maternal Outcomes for Translational Health Equity Research) mission is to address and eradicate inequities that Black women face through research, advocacy, and mentorship.

Recent Publications & Achievements



Advancing Parent and Newborn Health Outcomes Through Community-Based Collaboration: A Somerville-Tufts University Partnership
The Journal of Participatory Research Methods, July 2024



The impact of hostile abortion legislation on the United States maternal mortality crisis: a call for increased abortion education. Frontiers in Public Health February 2024



A Community-Based Policy Approach to Advance Maternal & Reproductive Health Research among Minoritized Birthing Populations in the United States
Harvard Undergraduate Health Policy Review, February 2024



A Qualitative Study of Hospitals and Payers Implementing Community Doula Support
The Journey of Midwifery & Women's Health, January 2024



The Practical Playbook III: Working Together to Improve Maternal Health
Oxford University Press, 2024



The Color Line of Infertility Reproductive Disparities in Black Women. From the book Black Women and Resilience Suny Press, 2024

Nurture Kits

The Nurture Kits initiative provides postpartum items to support the physical recovery and emotional well-being for low-income expectant birthers.

Grants

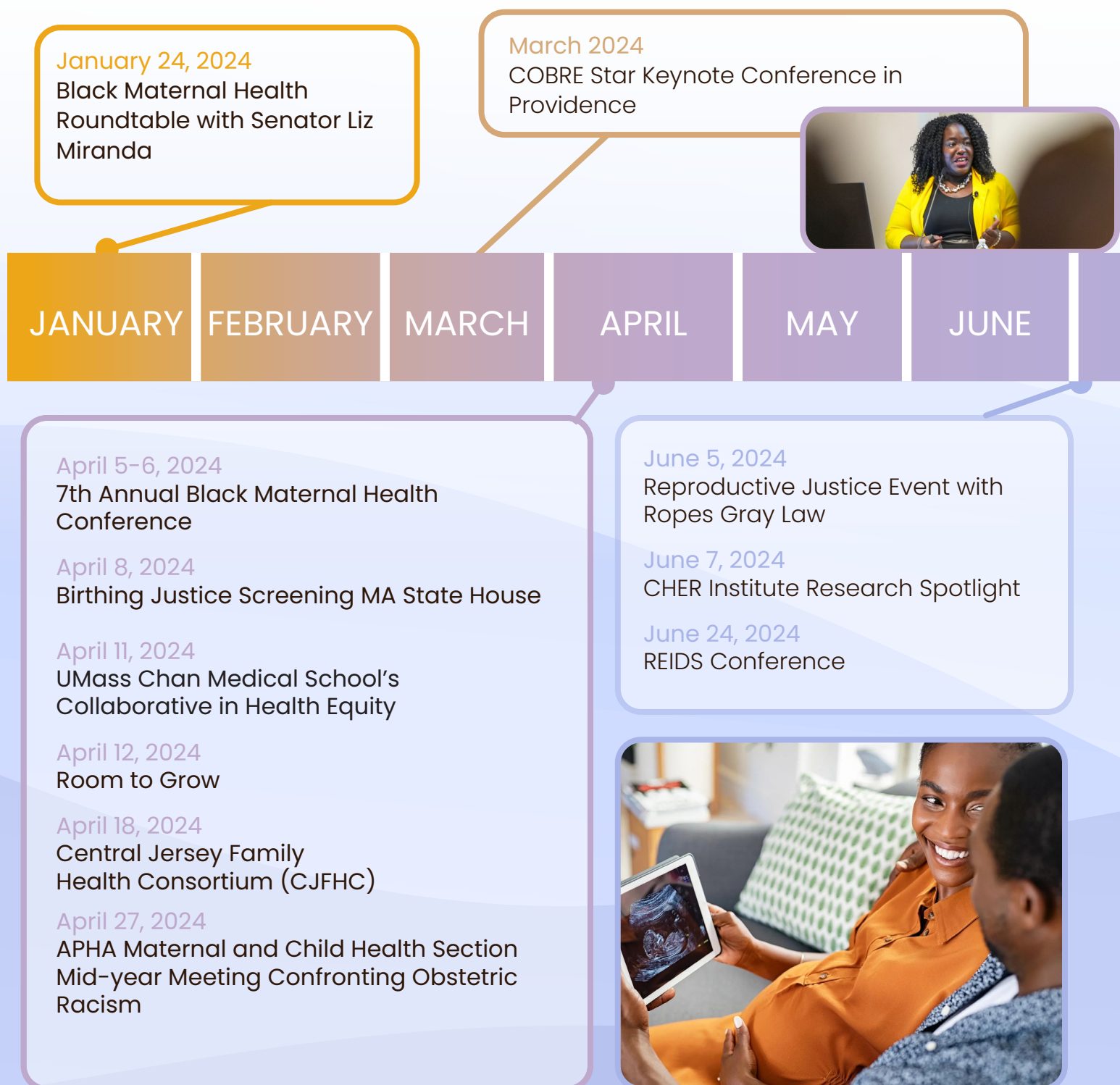
- The Heart of Healthcare Grant
- Organon | Her Plan is Her Power
- Tisch College Community Research Center (TCRC)
Somerbaby Grant
- Project INSPIRE





CENTER ON THE MOVE

The Center was represented in several speaking engagements, and panel discussions, while delivering double-digit keynote addresses at some of the most notable public health events of the year.

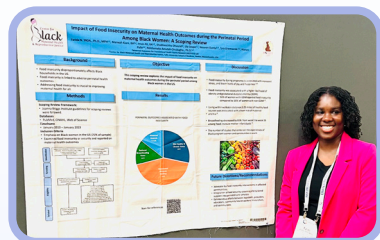


October 2 & 9, 2024

Amanda Seales Small Doses Podcast

October 27-30, 2024

APHA Annual Meeting - Presentations



November 21, 2024

The Fight For Black Lives Film Screening & Panel Discussion

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

July 20, 2024

EmPOWERED Patients
Boston Medical Center, The White Dress
Project & Resilient Sisterhood Project

July 23, 2024

Finer Women Amplifying the
Extraordinary Power of S.H.E.
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

August 27, 2024

Ceremonial Signing of
H.4999 MA Maternal Health
Mornibus





CENTER IN THE NEWS

The Washington Post

"We're just supposed to be bulletproof — in labor, in all parts of our lives. And that level of invincibility does not bode well for us."

[Read the full article ↗](#)

"The reliance on race as a determinant in clinical diagnosis exacerbates existing racial inequities in health and health care based on racial distinction."

[Listen to the full interview ↗](#)



Bloomberg

"Limiting access to care and pushing people further out of their home communities are direct contributors to maternal morbidity. It's that simple."

[Read the full article ↗](#)

Full List of Center Speaking & Media Contributions

TITLE	PUBLISHED BY
State of Emergency: Black Women at Risk for Maternal Morbidity and Mortality	NIH CEAL Community Engagment Alliance
Black Women and Maternal Health Disparities: Addressing the Role of Racism	Creating Healthier Communities - Black Birthing Initiative Convening
Under The Skin	Race & Health Podcast
3 strategies that are improving Black obstetric outcomes	Modern Healthcare
The Black Maternal Health Crisis - Part 1	Week 25 News
The Black Maternal Health Crisis - Part 2	Week 25 News
Purpose of Through My Lens Panel	NICHD's Division of Population Health Research (DiPHR) Professional Development Committee (PDC).
Black Women and Maternal Health Disparities: Addressing the Role of Racism	COBRE Center for Stress, Trauma, and Resilience
7th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference	Center for Black Maternal Health & Reproductive Justice
Premiere: Black Motherhood Through the Lens	Center for Black Maternal Health & Reproductive Justice MA Black and Latino Legislative Caucus
Safety bundles' may reduce pregnancy-related deaths, particularly among Black women	American Heart Assn.
	Room to Grow Talks: Black Maternal Health
The Role of Tech in Addressing Black Maternal Health Disparities	21Ninety
Black Maternal Health Conference 2024, "Turning up the Volume by Partnering with a Purpose: A Focus on Black Maternal Health"	Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
U.S. maternal mortality rate dips, but will the trend continue?	Stat Health
The Maternal Mortality Rate Dipped For Black Women. The Reason Is Complicated.	Capital B
Montgomery County hosts collaborative maternal health conference to address public health disparities in mortality, morbidity	North Penn Now
Montgomery County Leads the Charge in Maternal Health with Inaugural Conference	MyChesCo
Unveiling Maternal Health Disparities: Addressing the Impact of Racism	NIH: Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes
Birthing Justice: Finding A Way Forward	WGBH
'Concordant care' called crucial in improving Black childbirth outcomes	Commonwealth Beacon
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, and Jacobson LLP	Reproductive Justice and Maternal Mortality Panel
CHER Institute	CHER Institute Research Spotlight
How to Advocate For Yourself at the Doctor's Office	MSN/21Ninety
Maternal Infant Health Summit	7th Annual Maternal Infant Health Summit (MIHS)
Lankeanu Medical Center Grand Rounds	Lankeanu Medical Center
Massachusetts must address our maternal health crisis	Commonwealth Beacon
Thriving Together: A Dynamic Workshop Elevating Black Women's Health	American Diabetes Association
Improving Maternal Health Outcomes in Black Women	Everyday Health
Massachusetts will have a path to more midwives and birth centers — if lawmakers can agree	GBH Boston
As Rural Hospitals Shutter Maternity Wards, Urban Ones Follow	Bloomberg
If reproductive rights continue to be restricted, Black mothers will pay the price	The Los Angeles Loyolan
Side Effects Of... Black Maternal Health Part I & II	Small Doses Podcast with Amanda Seales
Why Black women are being told to speak up during and after childbirth	The Washington Post



BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Black Maternal Health Conference

In its 7th year, the 2024 Black Maternal Health Conference, the nation's largest convening focused on global Black maternal health outcomes, with more than 1300 attendees, took place on April 5-6, 2024. Each year, the Conference is recognized as the kick-off to Black Maternal Health Week, typically observed on April 11-17.

Goals of the Annual Black Maternal Health Conference:

- Identify how health professionals can improve the Black maternal health experience.
- Understand the role that bias and systemic racism play in causing adverse maternal health outcomes for Black birthing people in the U.S.
- Facilitate conversations between health professionals and the community at large on ways to become advocates and improve Black maternal healthcare.





CONFERENCE IN REVIEW

CENTERING THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN
ADDRESSING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH DISPARITIES
APRIL 5-6, 2024 | HYBRID CONFERENCE

1ST

Paid
registration
conference

1300

Virtual &
In-person
attendees

60%

Average
attendance on
Day 1

WE HOSTED SEVERAL GUESTS ACROSS ACADEMIA, HEALTHCARE,
AND GOVERNMENT, SPONSORS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS,
SUPPORTERS, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS, INCLUDING:

Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell

Senator Liz Miranda (D-MA)

Representative Marjorie Decker (D-MA)

Dr. Robert Goldstein, Commissioner of the Massachusetts
Department of Public Health

Dr. Hafsatu Diop, Massachusetts Assistant Commissioner for
Health Equity

Portland Community Health Center

University of South Florida

AmeriHealth Caritas of Pennsylvania

Kansas Children's Service League

Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of NJ

Alameda County Family Health Services, MPCA



"An amazing conference. Thank you all for sharing your stories and expertise. I **must roll up my sleeves and do more.**" – Sabrina Sanders

"Thank you all so much for this conference and all of the information and resources that were provided. We are the ones that we have been waiting for!" – Tiffany Eaton

"Thank you so much for an amazing and informative conference." – Latasha Keller, CNM from Detroit, MI

CHAMPION SPONSOR

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD ASSOCIATION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Key takeaways from this year's conference include:

- Turning qualitative, lived experiences into actionable data for hospitals, payers, providers, government agencies, national maternal and child health organizations, and state and city collaboratives
- Advancing accountability and transparency in birth equity. Building and sustaining systems of responsibility
- Building and sustaining communities of care around birthing people.
- Ongoing support for non-clinical care providers such as Midwives, Doulas, perinatal mental health providers, etc.
- Closing the gaps in clinical data, especially reporting between prenatal appointments and one year postpartum



The conference featured a diverse lineup of speakers, including leading researchers, healthcare practitioners, technology innovators, and community organizers:

- Jessica Bell Van de Wall, CEO, Frame Fertility
- Layo George, founder and CEO, Wolomi
- Melissa Hanna, CEO and co-founder, Mahmee
- Wanda Irving, co-founder and Chairman of the Board, Believe Her App
- Kimberly Seals Allers, Founder, The Irth App
- Simmone Taitt, Founder and CEO, Poppy Seed Health
- Ariana McGee, Theadora James, and Elicia Harris, MD, Co-founders, Navigate Maternity

Friday, April 4th, 2025

8th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference

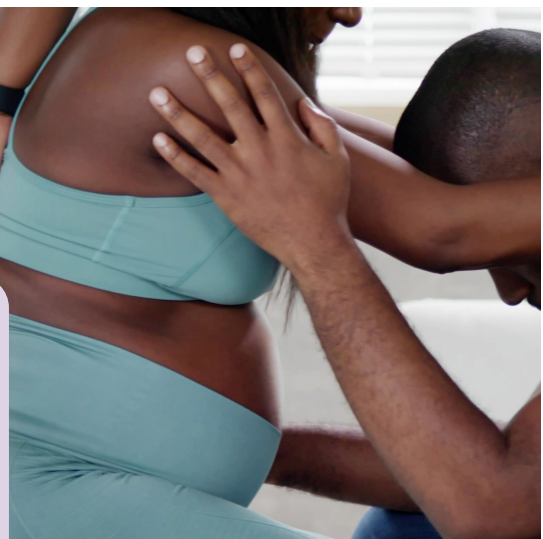
Centering the Role of Fatherhood in Addressing Black Maternal Health Disparities



**LOOKING
AHEAD**

The Doula Project

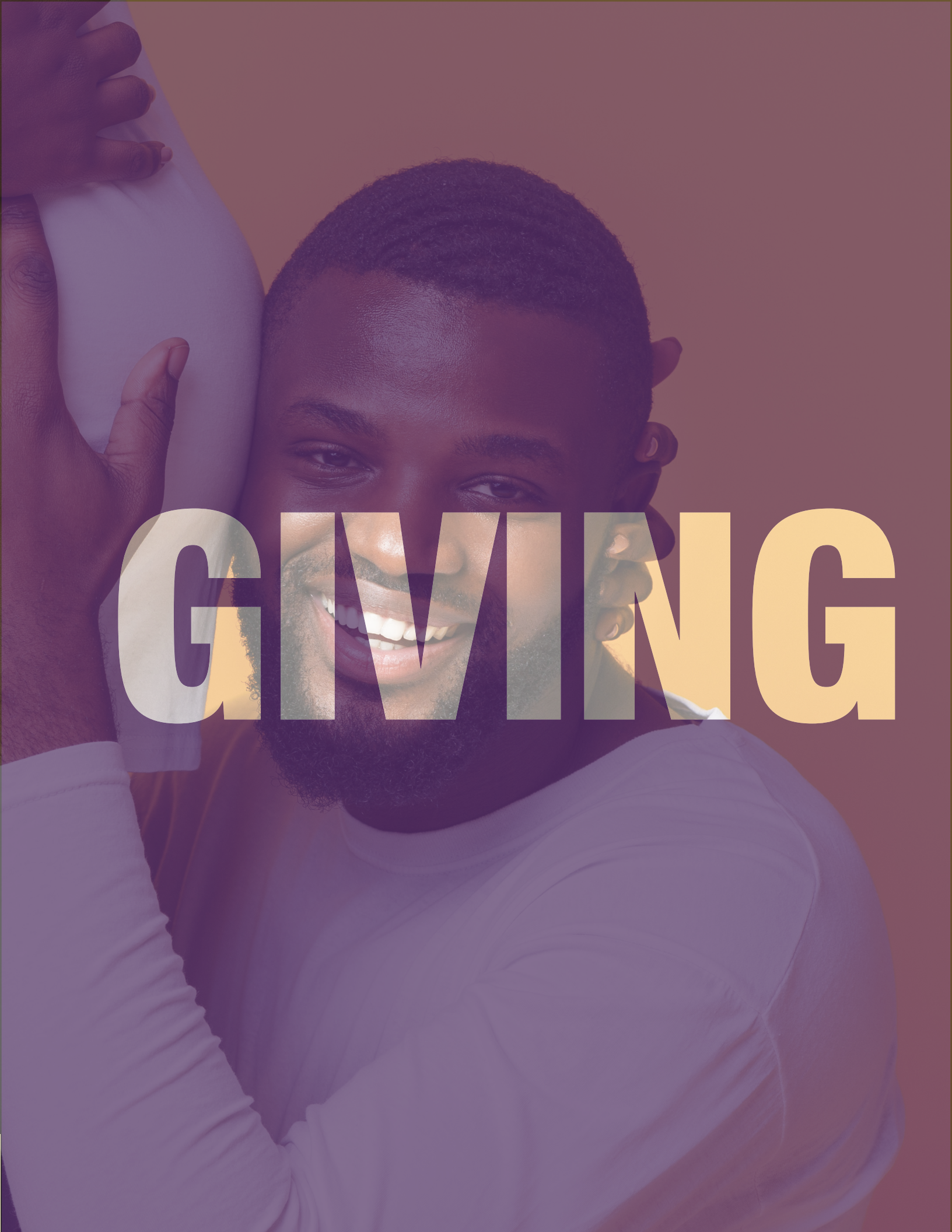
An interactive toolkit, created as part of the Massachusetts Attorney General Maternal Health Equity Grant, to support doulas and enrolled MassHealth members in achieving equitable doula care. This toolkit will be designed with a Black maternal health community engagement framework to ensure Black and Brown birthing individuals and doulas have increased access to care and pay, respectively.



8th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference

Every year, BMHC brings Black birthers and their families, birthworkers, health experts, researchers, students, community members, and change agents to learn about the current work to improve the Black maternal health crisis in the United States. There is an urgency to disrupt the status quo in maternal health. We seek to raise awareness, inspire activism, and encourage community building. Participants leave educated, inspired, and equipped to continue the fight for Black maternal health equity.





GIVING

Make a Difference Today

The Center for Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice is dedicated to improving the health of Black birthing persons, reducing maternal health disparities, and protecting the Black birthing experience by advocating for quality, equitable, and respectful care in childbirth.

With your help, we can:

- Foster academic and community-engaged research in support of eliminating inequities.
- Influence and inform policymakers to support maternal and child health laws to close the gap on Black maternal and infant health disparities.
- Serve as a workforce development institute for students and public health professionals, facilitating education and training to center diversity, equity, and inclusion for developing health practitioners as well as those currently practicing in the field.
- Engage with community partners and stakeholders to support healthy mothers and healthy babies, locally and nationwide.
- Advocate for Black birthing people in the spaces where their voices are unheard or often not permitted. To tell their stories while creating momentum for changes system-wide.



Ways to Give



One-Time Donation

Make a single, impactful contribution today to support our immediate needs.



Monthly Giving

Join our community of monthly donors, providing stable support for ongoing projects and initiatives.



In Honor/Memory Of

Dedicate your donation to a loved one, celebrating their legacy or marking a special occasion.

Online

To make a gift online: go.tufts.edu/BlackMaternalHealth

Or By Mail

Please make your check out to “Trustees of Tufts College” with “Center for Black Maternal Health” in the memo line, and mail to:

Tufts University School of Medicine
P.O. Box 3306
Boston, MA 02241-3306

Questions?

For more information about other ways to give, including gifts of stock, gifts from your IRA, endowed gifts, or planned gifts, visit medicine.tufts.edu/give.

Or contact the Tufts University Office of Development via phone at 617-636-6770 or email medicine-giving@tufts.edu.

Your generosity fuels our efforts,
and together, we can create positive change.

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT

STAY CONNECTED



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[cbmhrjtufts8310](https://www.youtube.com/cbmhrjtufts8310)



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