



Year in Review

2025



**MOTHER
LAB**



Tufts
UNIVERSITY



MOTHER LAB

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MISSION



**MOTHER
LAB**

The Maternal Outcomes for Translational Health Equity Research (MOTHER) Lab is a unit of the Center for Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice in the Tufts School of Medicine. This unit is comprised of students, public health practitioners, and others who are passionate about equitable maternal health. Together, they support the research development, policy, community engagement, education, and training efforts of the Center.

The MOTHER Lab's mission is to address and eradicate **inequities** Black women face, through **research**, **advocacy**, and **mentorship** by confronting and **dismantling the system** that enables and perpetuates racism for Black women who give birth.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear MOTHER Lab Family,

As we step into a new year, I want to pause and acknowledge the steadiness, discipline, and care that have carried this community through a demanding season. The MOTHER Lab remains a space defined not only by intellectual excellence, but by a shared commitment to advancing Black maternal health and reproductive justice with clarity, intention, and integrity.

This past year required focus. It asked us to sharpen our questions, deepen our methods, and remain anchored in evidence and lived experience at the same time. Across research, policy, and community-engaged work, you continued to center Black birthing people and families, producing meaningful research and work that is thoughtful, rigorous, and responsive to real-world conditions. That commitment matters.

What distinguishes the MOTHER Lab is not simply the scholarship we generate, but the way we train people to think, to listen, and to lead. Our students are the best of the best, bringing intellectual rigor, ethical grounding, and a deep sense of responsibility to this work. The skills developed here extend well beyond any single project or publication. The core of MOTHER Lab is shaping scholars and practitioners equipped to strengthen systems, inform practice, and contribute meaningfully to the future of maternal health.

Looking ahead, our charge is to remain grounded and forward-facing. The world will continue to shift, and our responsibility is to meet those shifts with curiosity, discipline, and collaboration across sectors and perspectives. Stay connected to one another, continue building knowledge together, and hold fast to learning that is both excellent and accountable.

Thank you for the commitment, care, and thoughtfulness you bring to this community. I look forward to what we will continue to build together in the year ahead and I am so very proud of each and every one of you.

With appreciation,



Founder & Director, MOTHER Lab



2025 PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2025 Academic Presentations

- **Emily Teixeira, Kimberly Pothemont, & Brian Kwarteng** presented “The Partner Experience: An Exploration of the Partner Role from Pregnancy through the Postpartum Period” at the 8th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference.
- **Jennifer Chiagozie Madu** presented her Fellowship Research Project for the Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health at Boston University on Structural Racism and Small Vulnerable Newborn outcomes.



2025 Academic Publications

- **Dr. Farida Yada's** latest article, “Type of Attendant at Birth by Detailed Maternal Nativity among US-born, Latin American and Caribbean-born, and Sub-Saharan African-born Black Women,” is now published in Populations!
- **Dr. Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, Dr. Heather A. Olden, and Dr. Farida N. Yada** published the article "Advancing Birth Quality by Bridging Historical and Contemporary Gaps on Black Maternal Health" in the Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing (JOGNN)

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2025 Accomplishments

- **Jennifer Madu** completed an internship with MassNOW - contributing to advancing reproductive health equity across the Commonwealth
- **Emily Teixeira** participated in Tufts in Chile: *Indigenous approaches to healthcare through global and regional perspectives*, where she shadowed across public, private, and indigenous systems - including maternity wards.
- **Nessren Ourdyl** worked on the Breastfeeding Manuscript, Mommy Plug Product, Teens & Tots, and Natality/Birthing Decisions Project as Project leader.
- **Brian Johnson Kwarteng** assumed the position of leader for the Teens and Tots Data Entry project and cut cases down to less than 300 cases.
- **Maia Kiner** pulled together a cited resource list of safe medicines for pregnant people amidst a swarm of misinformation from our current public health administration.
- **Elizabeth Joseph-Williams** worked with the research team on the Mommy Plug project and contributed to researching state-specific perinatal resources for five states for the proposed directory. She also contributed to the 'What to ask when you're expecting-Black Momma edition' project, providing information on questions to ask in the different pregnancy trimesters. Currently working with the team on the Birthing Decision project, contributing to the data analysis.



- **Hadiya Severin** is currently serving as an APHA Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Student Fellow, contributing to maternal health and reproductive justice research, program coordination, and dissemination efforts. She also led and executed the first statewide birthworker convening in Massachusetts, bringing together doulas, midwives, researchers, and community stakeholders to advance Black maternal health, reproductive justice, and collective care, and supports knowledge translation and field-building through guest lecturing and policy engagement.
- **Chelsea Liu** took over as the podcast lead! Chelsea also completed her Laidlaw Scholars program with the project INSPIRE. In Arusha, Tanzania, she helped create sustainable sanitary pad kits and collaborated with school districts to develop SRH curricula (in partnership with the Widows Empowerment and HIV/AIDS Foundation). Chelsea also wrapped up her public health internship with the CBMHRJ, and completed a literature review relevant to the menopause taskforce policy.

LEADERSHIP AND LAB MEMBERS

Leadership:

Judith Jeanty, *Program Admin*

Candace Stewart, *MOTHER Lab Unit Lead*

Sunde Daniels, *Education and Training Unit Lead*

Dr. Heather Olden, *Postdoctoral Research Fellow*

Members that joined in 2025:

- Briana Ventura Moreno
- Mae Johnson
- Olivia Ofurie
- Nanette Amihere
- Jennifer Madu
- Vasundhra Maharajan

2025 Members:

Emily Teixeira
Hadiya Severin
Tayler Whittler
Himasri Shapally
Victoria Adegboyega
Ruth Appiah Kubi
Carol Bautista
Madison Brown
Sophia Cassim
Yordanos Degefe
Carlita Garrett
Cayce James
Elizabeth Joseph-Williams
Mira Kaskas
Maia Kiner
Brian Kwarteng
Chelsea Liu
Grace Moore
Alexsas Mwango Misoka
Daliah Ouedraogo
Nessren Ourdyl
Kemiah Owoh
Maya Raman



ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

- **Kobi V. Ajayi**, Research Assistant Professor of Maternal and Child Health, Texas A&M University, wrote the incredible article: "Texas cities have some of the highest preterm birth rates in the US, highlighting maternal health crisis nationwide," *The Conversation*



- **Vickie Dugat**, PhD, MPH, now holds the positions of Program Director of Connecting Kids to Coverage Program and Research Associate, Center of Excellence in MCH Education. She completed her Postdoctoral training in Maternal and Child Health in the Center of Excellence of MCH at the University of South Florida in February of 2025 and began her current roles shortly after. Dr. Dugat was also awarded the ATMCH \$3,000 Teaching Award, the Recipient of the Connecting Kids to Coverage (CKC) Outreach and Enrollment Cooperative Agreement Program, totaling \$3 million, and was the organizer of statewide convenings and initiatives advancing Black maternal health, health coverage access, and MCH leadership development, and co-Author of Navigating Black Maternal Mental Health (Chapter 8).

- **Ryiah Barnes** has been working as a Community Education Advocate at a domestic violence agency since graduating from UIUC in 2024 and passed the Certified Health Education Specialist examination in April 2025.
- **Aver Yakubu**, PhD, MHA, MPH, is serving as Interim Executive Director of Nuturely!

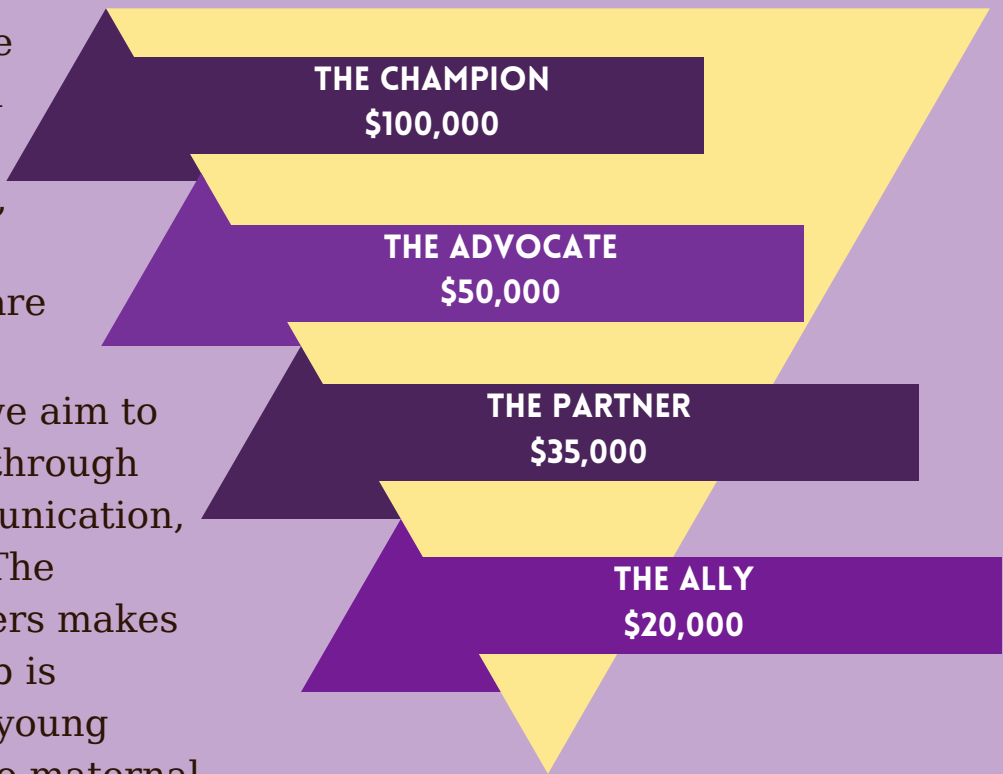


SPONSORSHIP

Every donation directly fuels the mission of MOTHER Lab, enabling us to sustain and expand our impact. Contributions help provide stipends for our dedicated members, fund critical research and publications, and support travel to conferences where we share our findings.

As we continue to grow, we aim to reach broader audiences through advocacy, strategic communication, and innovative research. The generosity of our supporters makes this work possible. Our lab is powered by students and young professionals committed to maternal health equity—your support ensures they have the resources needed to keep driving change.

Thank you for investing in our mission and the future of maternal health.



Sponsorship Levels:

- THE CHAMPION:** Provides stipends for all lab members for 2 semesters
- THE ADVOCATE:** Provides stipends for all lab members for 1 semester
- THE PARTNER:** ML publications and conference support
- THE ALLY:** Sends ML members to state and local conferences

STAY CONNECTED

We thank **you** for your continued support in our efforts to lessen and research the Maternal Health Crisis in the USA. Learn more on how to **support us and connect with us** below!

Follow Us!!!

CONTACT



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SUPPORT



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