

Making every mother count:

Why we focus on Black maternal health



The United States is in the midst of a maternal health crisis that disproportionately affects Black women.

Bias and racism in our healthcare system are driving worsening racial disparities in maternal health outcomes and experiences of care. Black women are **3.5 times more likely to die** from pregnancy and childbirth complications than their white counterparts and are more likely to experience **disrespect and mistreatment** in healthcare settings.

Data shows that the **majority of maternal deaths are preventable** with quality, respectful maternity care. We believe that centering those most impacted will result in a stronger, more equitable system for all.

How Every Mother Counts centers Black maternal health:

We advocate for policy solutions aimed at addressing maternal health disparities, including:

- Supporting the development, diversification, and sustainability of the community-based maternity care workforce.
- Advancing evidence-based models of care proven to reduce disparities, like community-based doulas, midwives, and community birth options (including freestanding birth centers).
- Protecting and enhancing Medicaid coverage throughout the entire pregnancy journey, including the postpartum period.
- Passing the **Momnibus Act**—a package of bills designed to comprehensively address America's maternal health crisis.

We support community-led solutions by investing in leaders that reflect the communities they serve:

- 95% of EMC's core grantee organizations are BIPOC- and locally led.
- 90% of EMC's core grantee organizations are led by women.
- 80% of EMC's core grantee organizations are led by maternal health or support providers (i.e., doulas, midwives, physicians, nurses).

We raise awareness about Black maternal health by:

- Amplifying the voices of Black mothers and maternity care providers.
- Creating resources for policymakers and advocates with a birth equity lens, such as **Advancing Birth Justice** and our **Advocacy Toolkit**.

What you can do:

1. Use EMC's [Take Action platform](#) to urge your representatives in Congress to support key maternal health policies.
2. Watch and share EMC's films spotlighting the stories of Black mothers and maternity care providers, including [Giving Birth in America: Arkansas](#) and [Giving Birth in America: New York](#).
3. Learn about and support maternal health organizations that center Black communities through their work, including some of our incredible grantee partners:
 - [Ancient Song](#) (NY & NJ)
 - [Birth Detroit](#) (MI)
 - [Birthmark Doula Collective](#) (LA)
 - [Chicago South Side Birth Center](#) (IL)
 - [Commonsense Childbirth](#) (FL)
 - [Community of Hope](#) (Washington D.C.)
 - [Jamaa Birth Village](#) (MO)
 - [Magnolia Birth House](#) (FL)
 - [Mamatoto Village](#) (Washington D.C.)
 - [National Association to Advance Black Birth](#)
 - [Neighborhood Birth Center](#) (MA)
 - [Oklahoma Birth Equity Initiative](#) (OK)
 - [Roots Community Birth Center](#) (MN)
 - [Shades of Blue Project](#) (TX)
 - [SisterWeb](#) (CA)
 - [Uzazi Village](#) (MO)
 - [Village Birth International](#) (NY)

Did you know?

Medicaid covers

65%

[of births to Black mothers](#) in the U.S.

16.3%

[of Black mothers live in maternity care deserts](#)—areas with zero obstetric care facilities or providers—nearly twice the national average.

only 5%

[of the physician workforce](#) is comprised of Black physicians, and

just 7%

[of the certified nurse-midwife \(CNM\) and certified midwife \(CM\) workforce](#) is comprised of Black midwives in the U.S.

Motivated by the intrinsic human right to maternal health, Every Mother Counts is dedicated to ensuring that all people, everywhere, experience a safe, respectful, and equitable journey through pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. We started by spotlighting stories told by those closest to the issue. Over time, these personal accounts have shone a spotlight on the global imperative to transform maternal health. Since 2010, we have invested tens of millions of dollars to advance system-wide change through the development of professional, dedicated, and compassionate providers in every setting who are focused on respectful care that centers mothers.