



NEWS RELEASE

Public Health

April 13, 2021

CONTACT:

Francis Delapaz
Media Specialist
(909) 387-6611

francis.delapaz@dph.sbcounty.gov

San Bernardino and Riverside Counties Partner to Launch Black Maternal Health Equity Campaign



The Perinatal Equity Initiatives (PEI) of Riverside and San Bernardino counties have partnered to launch a maternal health equity campaign to increase awareness of the growing number of maternal and infant mortality in the Black community.

The campaign's theme is "Rallying Around Sisters: Redefining and Strengthening the Village," intentionally chosen to highlight the importance of community in combating the alarming statistics related to Black maternal and infant mortality.

"Both counties saw fit to highlight the importance and foster a sense of sisterhood for our mothers. Community is so important in all aspects of life, but especially so during a life-changing experience like bringing new life into the world," says Elizabeth Sneed-Berrie, Public Health Program Coordinator for Black Infant Health Program/Perinatal Equity Initiative for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. "Our program helps mothers navigate the health disparity that exists in our community that is, unfortunately, deeply intertwined with what should be one of the happiest times of their lives."

PEI was implemented to enhance the services of the Black Infant Health (BIH) Program. The PEI interventions provided by San Bernardino and Riverside counties focus on: doula/midwifery, fatherhood/partner, home visiting and implicit bias. The initiative aims to reach Black women who are unable to participate in the Black Infant Program through free services provided by community-based organizations.

Black women deserve quality health care. According to data from the [California Department of Public Health](#), white women receive more quality health care than other ethnic groups. Compared to white mothers:

- Black mothers are nearly **4 times more likely** than white mothers to die from pregnancy-related causes
- Black women are at a **1.7 times higher risk** of having a preterm birth when compared to white women
- Black babies are **2 times more likely** than white babies to die before their first birthday

BIH supports expecting and postpartum Black mothers through a group-based approach to develop life skills, learn stress-reducing strategies and build social support. Fostering a culturally-affirming environment and honoring the unique history of Black women, BIH participants attend weekly group sessions that are supported by one-to-one case management and designed to help access their strengths while setting goals for themselves and their babies.

"Black Infant Health made me feel strong. Sometimes, as a single mother, you want to give up, and then you're around other moms, and it empowers you because we're all going through this and we can all get through this," says program alum Ebonie. "We learned so much, and there was so much empowerment; it was really good. Being surrounded by strong Black women, you can't really beat that."

For more information, visit <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/fhs/bih> and join in on the conversation on our social media platforms.