



BLACK MOTHERS' AND WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

2021 November

BLACK
BELONGING. LOVE. AFFINITY. COMMUNITY. KINSHIP.
WELLNESS & PROSPERITY CENTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Person-centered care starts with viewing health care through the lens of patients. Listening to the lived experiences and voices of Black girls, women, mothers, and birthing persons* can facilitate shared understanding and a development of a respectful care plan.

These experiences, good and bad can help provide valuable information to the healthcare community to help guide improvements in the experiences of Black women.

When a woman's voice is amplified, it can also encourage others to speak up and advocate for their needs.

To exact change in the way Black women experience healthcare, it is essential for all care providers to invest in developing cultural intelligence, practice delivering culturally respectful care, and adopt flexible care models.

Most importantly, all care providers must own implicit biases, prioritize accountability to patients, respect the lived experiences of patients, and acknowledge women as experts on their bodies.

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Black women do not feel listened to in healthcare settings** and feel that their input is devalued and dismissed in provider offices and hospital settings.
- Black women experience **adverse PREVENTABLE health issues**.
- Black women report experiencing **rudeness, objectification, and disrespect** of their bodies in healthcare environments.
- Black women report not being offered or receiving needed clinical interventions.
- Black women partially define "good" care as clear communication and prompt responses to concerns.
- Black women report that they observe differences in the way they are treated versus the way non-Black women are treated.
- Many Black women stated that their **providers disregarded their requests** for alternative care based on personal provider preference versus available clinical options.
- Black women feel validated and respected when their **requests were meaningfully considered** by medical professionals.
- **Black women feel the communication within the healthcare system is not effective or efficient**, causing undue stress and hardship from navigating between providers, hospitals, and insurance.

*In this report moving forward we used "Black women" but are inclusive of all Black girls, women, mothers, and birthing persons.

OUR VOICES

"**So I, was concerned, and** I asked if we could do an ultrasound. And she said:"- Oh no, well, I don't have a concern for you, it's not necessary ."- It was a lot of frustration. It was too late for me to switch doctors, but **I ended up getting her to get me the ultrasound. We did the ultrasound, and boom, there's a concern.** The baby was small and wasn't growing anymore."

"**It wasn't explained to me why vaginal birth couldn't have been done.** It was like: "- Oh, one baby is breech. "-You're getting a C-section!" - that's it. Everything else is my birth plan was out of the window. They did not explain anything else or provide alternative options."

"**No support, no communication.** I was going to doctors, I felt like every other day. **If it's, such a high-risk pregnancy, then why aren't you guys communicating to me what needs to be communicated?"**

"I think when the situation happened, **I felt embarrassed.** And now I'm just like, **if I were to remember the nurses' names I was supposed to be in the care of, I would actually sue them.**"

"I would say **good care is a care that is supportive.** That is respectful. A care that listens to me."

"**I had a C-section, and I was in a lot of pain afterwards.** Whenever I complained about my pain to the nurses, they had called the doctor. (...) One of the nurses had got ahold to my doctor to see if they could give me something stronger. And she did that as soon as possible, Within the next hour or so she came and gave me something stronger. **So, the two nurses that I did have, they were very good.**"



HEALTHCARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Establish a safe space, such as community conversations to build **trust and mutual respect**.

Recommendation 2: Create opportunities for Black women to amplify their voice and for providers to listen and learn how to **share healthcare power** with Black women.

- **Recommendation 3:** Routinize and integrate learnings from community conversations with Black women into assessment and evaluation processes.
- **Recommendation 4:** Actively and regularly seek institutional and individual opportunities to understand, advocate for, and adopt policies and procedures that will transform the BLACK healthcare experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT : THANK YOU TO THE WOMEN WHO SHARED THEIR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES TO HELP US IMPROVE CARE DELIVERY FOR ALL WOMEN.



BLACK Wellness & Prosperity Center Supports the **Black Birthing Bill of Rights**

Developed by the *National Association to Advance Black Birth*

Black Birthing Bill of Rights

At NAABB we believe that all Black women and persons are entitled to equitable, comprehensive, and quality pre - and postpartum care in order to achieve their full birthing potential and thrive during the childbearing years. The Black Birthing Bill of Rights serves as a resource for individuals to become knowledgeable of their rights as a Black person in need of maternal care. It also serves as guidance to engage hospitals, health providers, government health agencies and others to change/improve their ethics, policies, and delivery approach to serving Black women and persons throughout the birthing process

1. I have the right to be listened to and heard.
2. I have the right to have my humanity recognized and acknowledged.
3. I have the right to be respected and to receive respectful care.
4. I have the right to be believed and acknowledged that my experiences are valid.
5. I have the right to be informed of all available options for pain relief.
6. I have the right to choose how I want to nourish my child and to have my choice be supported.
7. I have the right to early postpartum visits and individualized postpartum care.
8. I have the right to restorative justice and mediation to address obstetric violence, neglect, or other injustices.
9. I have the right to choose the family and friends that are present during my pregnancy, birth and postpartum care.
10. I have the right to receive accurate information that will allow me to give informed consent or refusal.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO
ADVANCE BLACK BIRTH



HOW WE ADVOCATE

BWPC advocates for **B**elonging, **L**ove, **A**ffinity, **C**ommunity, and **K**inship through culturally congruent system improvements across the life course to advance well-being and improved outcomes for Black women, babies, and families.

We are proud supporters of two key legislations in California: SB 65: Maternal care and service (Momnibus) and SB 464: California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.

LEGISLATION - SB 65 (Skinner) California Momnibus

Act: re-imagines maternal health to improve perinatal outcomes, close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes.

- Codifies and strengthens the work of the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Committee, which will investigate pregnancy-related deaths and make recommendations on best practices to avoid these preventable tragedies
- Updates data collection and protocol in the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review process
- Builds midwifery workforce
- Establishes a stakeholder workgroup to aid the implementation of the new Medi-Cal doula benefit
- Clarifies that pregnant people are exempt from CalWORKs welfare-to-work requirements

LEGISLATION - SB 464 (Mitchell) – the California

Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act: designed to begin to address the harms caused by racism.

- Requires hospitals that provide perinatal care and birth centers to implement an evidence-based implicit bias training program for all health care providers
- Improves death certificate reporting to get more accurate maternal death count in CA
- Requires publication of maternal morbidity/mortality data, stratified by race
- Improves community education about ways to report experiences of healthcare associated discrimination

Access SB 65 and SB 464 info sheets on the BWPC website at: blackwpc.org/advocacy

YOUR HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

Exercise your Rights as a Patient: You Deserve Respectful Care

VIEW Your HEALTHCARE RIGHTS at blackwpc.org/advocacy

If you feel like you have not received the care you need, first, try to resolve the issue directly with your provider or with the hospital. If you're unable to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you can find suggested steps to follow at blackwpc.org/advocacy.