

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY BIRTH CENTER

Connecting Black Families to Culturally Responsive Maternity Care



BIRTH CENTER

CONTACT

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ABOUT SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY BIRTH CENTER

San Diego Community Birth Center is the only Black-owned birth center in San Diego County, centrally located in the City of San Diego. The birth center serves a diverse patient population, including active-duty military members, BIPOC clients, LGBTQIA2+ clients, and any people with low-risk pregnancies in San Diego who desire the midwifery model of care or are curious about an out-of-hospital birth experience.

Freestanding birth centers provide the opportunity for families to take a holistic and engaged approach to their birth experience with the support of highly trained licensed midwives. Since 2021, the San Diego Community Birth Center has provided local families with culturally responsive maternity care, community events, classes, and social connection.

A CASE STUDY OF THE BIRTH CENTER'S WORK TO IMPROVE MATERNAL OUTCOMES IN SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Community Birth Center's Pulse of Change project, Building Beloved Community, aims to improve Black maternal and infant health outcomes among the families it serves. With a Black midwife lead, the program uses an evidence-based group prenatal care model to provide education and culturally congruent care centered in the midwifery model of care. The birth center will facilitate strong coordination with a local hospital, including a Black ob/gyn partner, and provide prenatal patients with care that includes social interventions and resources.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

In 2023, maternal mortality rates in the U.S. decreased for most racial/ethnic groups, but they increased among Black birthing people. 50.3 out of every 100,000 Black live births resulted in death as compared to 14.5 for White births, making Black birthing people more than three times more likely to die from childbirth than their White counterparts. Similarly, from 2019-2021 in California, Black birthing people were 2.8 to 3.6 times more likely to die during pregnancy or labor than White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino birthing people.

These drastic disparities are connected to systemic racism and anti-Blackness, a problem that's much wider and deeper than the failure of any single individual. Because health care institutions—and all other mainstream systems in the U.S.—privilege and prioritize non-Black people, Black folks consistently and disproportionately suffer and experience fatalities. Black birthing people often die as a result of implicit bias or other preventable impacts of systemic racism. This project intends to provide Black prenatal patients with the care they need and deserve while also illuminating the larger systemic problem at play and working towards resolving systemic racism and anti-Blackness in health care.



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GOALS

- Patients have access to culturally competent care through a Black midwife and Black ob/gyn.
- Patients feel heard and understood by their prenatal providers.
- Patients and their families build community through the birth center's community events and classes.
- Patients and their babies experience positive birth outcomes.
- Patients receive timely postpartum care and early detection of postpartum issues, including postpartum preeclampsia and depression and anxiety.

STRATEGIES

- Provide holistic, individualized perinatal care through a Black midwife and Black ob/gyn.
- Engage Black and Brown families in group prenatal care with extended (60-minute) appointment time.
- Provide community-based education on navigating the health care system and self-advocacy.
- Collaborate with local hospitals to ensure streamlined and consistent care across institutions.
- Collect client feedback to evaluate their experiences in the program.

IMPACT METRICS

- Positive birth outcomes
- Increased breastfeeding rates
- Increased screening, detection, and intervention for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders
- Increased screenings for infant health and wellness before a standard 6-week postpartum visit and early intervention for any health issues
- Timely postpartum care and early detection of postpartum issues
- Decrease in paternal postpartum depression and anxiety

SUPPORTED BY CHCF'S PULSE OF CHANGE INITIATIVE

In late 2023, California Health Care Foundation put out a call for projects that would improve clinical quality of care for Black Californians. Of the many community clinics, hospitals, and technology start-ups from across the state that responded to the call, CHCF awarded grants to eight organizations using a variety of strategies to create a safer, stronger, and fairer health system for Black Californians. Funded projects focus on topics ranging from culturally responsive prenatal care to hypertension management and colorectal cancer screening.



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