

SOLID START

Enhancing Perinatal Mental Health Supports for Black Families



CONTACT

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PRIMARY CONTACT

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ABOUT SOLID START INITIATIVE

Launched in 2015, the Solid Start Initiative at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (ZSFG) exists to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children, and families through evidence-based practice and systemic change. Solid Start develops and evaluates innovative models of comprehensive care for pregnant people and families with young children. The initiative aims to ensure “every door is an open door,” and that all of ZSFG’s families are supported with their social and behavioral health needs as an integrated component of high-quality medical care.

A CASE STUDY OF THE SOLID START INITIATIVE’S BIRTH EQUITY WORK

The Solid Start Initiative recognizes that pregnancy is a critical window for disrupting intergenerational trauma. With its Pulse of Change project, Birth Equity Begins Before Birth, the initiative is working to improve mental health care and social supports for Black patients at ZSFG’s Obstetrics, Midwifery, and Gynecology Clinic (5M). The project will leverage timely and strategic alignment with CalAIM’s Enhanced Care Management (ECM) Population of Focus. Solid Start will implement a racially congruent psychosocial intake process to expedite Black patients’ enrollment in ECM with a lead care manager. The lead care manager will streamline perinatal mental health screenings and connect patients to mental health services and doula care.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

Decades of research have shown that investing in pregnant people and families with young children contributes to their future well-being and to the success of our society as a whole. Still, systemic inequities in Black maternal health care and outcomes persist across California and the U.S. Many Black families who give birth at ZSFG face significant psychological and social stressors due to exposure to racism, trauma, poverty, and/or violence, which in turn impacts birth outcomes. In response to these inequitable patterns, Solid Start’s project will focus on improving the mental health and care experiences of 20 Black prenatal patients at ZSFG.



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GOALS

- Patients experience improved care coordination from lead care managers.
- Patients receive earlier perinatal depression screenings and timely access to mental health care.
- Patients are connected to doulas.
- Patients experience improved mental health in the prenatal and postpartum periods.

STRATEGIES

- Pilot a Black-led psychosocial screening and ECM intake process for Black prenatal care patients at ZSFG's Obstetrics, Midwifery, and Gynecology Clinic (5M).
- Partner with two local community-based organizations to engage patients with full-scope doula support.

Examine the impact of ECM services on:

1. prenatal depression screening and linkage to mental health care, and
2. linkage to doula support during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

IMPACT METRICS

- Increased perinatal depression screening rates.
- Reduction in time from first perinatal mental health screening to linkage to appropriate mental health care.
- Reduction of depressive symptoms at rescreening(s) among Black patients linked to perinatal mental health services.
- Increased engagement with doulas in the prenatal period, during childbirth, and in the postpartum period.
- Improved care experience reported by patients.

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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