



Understanding Training and Workforce Pathways to Develop and Retain Black Maternal Health Clinicians in California

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- Speaker biographies and slides are available online at [Urban.org](https://www.urban.org).
- All participants are muted but you can type your **questions** and **comments** into the Q&A box at any time.
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Background and Purpose of Work

California Health Care Foundation

Birth Equity Portfolio

- Data monitoring and transparency
- Delivery system intervention
- Lived experience and community voice
- **Workforce**



CHCF believes the maternal health care workforce can provide better care by reflecting the diversity of the birthing people it serves, as well as the diversity of provider types that evidence shows yields strong outcomes.

Maternal Health Equity and Health Care Workforce

Public Health Crisis

- U.S. maternal mortality rates surpass other industrialized countries
- Black birthing people **3Xs more** likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause
- [Race concordance and specific birth teams](#) can improve patient health outcomes

Dark History of the Professions

- Origins of American gynecology: experimental procedures on enslaved Black women
- [Black midwives](#): systematic erasure from professionalized medicine

Research Overview

Methodology Snapshot

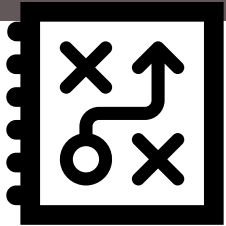
- In-depth qualitative interviews with Black maternal health clinicians:
 - Obstetricians
 - Labor and Delivery (L&D) Nurses
 - Midwives (CNM, CM, CPM)
 - Other stakeholders: educators and training program leadership
- Better understand 1) factors that generate or minimize barriers and 2) impact of licensure, reimbursement, and scope-of-practice regulations



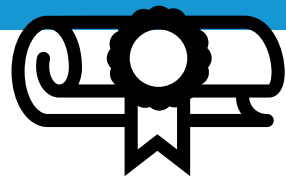
Findings

Findings: Common Themes

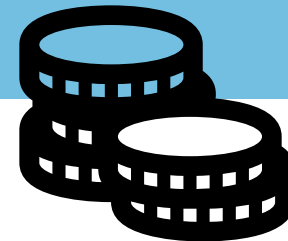
Difficulties in
Career Journey



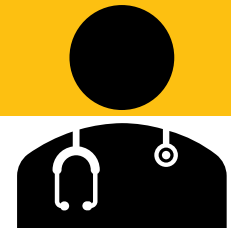
Barriers in
Education



Financial
Barriers



Profession-
Specific Hurdles



Difficulties in the Career Journey

- Career pathways unclear and sometimes actively blocked
- Importance of mentorship and community among black providers

My experience is just the picture that has been painted over a million years about who we are. I'm not supposed to be smart. I'm not supposed to be sure of myself. I'm not supposed to be cool, calm, and collected. It must be because I don't know what I'm doing. And there are people that aren't malicious, don't get me wrong. But the majority of it is just, 'she can't possibly be good.'

—Midwife interviewee

Barriers in Education

- Blatant discrimination
- Absence of institutional commitment to diversity and culturally effective care

If you diversify the student body but you don't diversify the faculty to go along with it, then you end up with people like me who are the only Black person. So you end up completely oversubscribed. But then everybody wants to make that a personal characteristic. Saying, 'You don't know how to manage your time.' And I'm like, 'Actually, no, this is a structural problem.' I will always fail in somebody's eyes around how I manage my time because there's not enough of me.

—L&D nurse interviewee

Financial Barriers

- Cost of education and Financial needs beyond tuition
 - High-quality classes to prepare for professional exams, exam fees, childcare, housing
- Health care facilities that primarily serve people of color but do not have adequate resources to pay competitive salaries

Part of the problem is we graduate with a mountain of debt, and then we take these jobs that are killing us. The burnout is real. And I think that we need support with this debt. I know that I've created a mountain of debt to become a midwife. But I will say that the job I have has been very pleasurable.

—Midwife interviewee

Profession Specific Hurdles

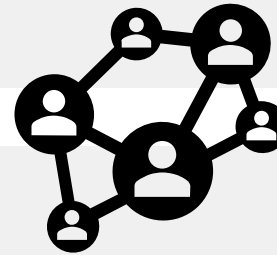
OB/GYN

Long road from medical school to practicing as an OB/GYN includes many opportunities for attrition or pushout



Midwife

Desire for diverse learning experiences and preceptors; preceptor match and time commitment; scope of practice and physician supervision



L&D Nurse

Undefined points of entry; cliques and politics that can block entrance

Strategies to Increase and Support the Black Maternal Health Workforce

Strategies to Increase and Support the Black Maternal Health Workforce

1. Provide financial support and reimbursement for services
2. Increase opportunities for mentorship and support for students and individuals transitioning to the workforce
3. Remove barriers to midwifery practice
4. Address staff diversity in hospitals
5. Work with Black students at the K–12 level



Provide Financial Support and Reimbursement for Services

- Providing state or federal subsidies for midwifery education that include the provision of midwifery trainee stipends and stipends to the clinical training sites
- Increasing the number of scholarships available for maternal health trainees
- Instituting and sustaining loan repayment programs for Black maternal health clinicians
- Providing competitive reimbursements to Black maternal health clinicians

Develop Training and Support Programs for Black Maternal Health Professionals

- Supporting mentoring programs for students and trainees transitioning to the workforce
- Facilitating convenings for Black maternal health clinicians
- Creating accelerated nurse residency programs specifically for Black nurses, with a focus on labor and delivery
- Hiring more Black educators to train the next generation of maternal health clinicians
- Creating supportive environments for Black birthing professionals at the institutional level

Remove Barriers to Midwifery Practice

- Increasing access to out-of-hospital deliveries by supporting birth centers
- Partnering with professional associations to increase insurance coverage and reimbursement
- Raising public awareness about midwifery and out-of-hospital care

Address Maternal Health Workforce Diversity in Hospital Settings

- Partnering with hospitals to create an L&D new graduate residency program for nurses
- Providing professional development funding to help drive diversity at all levels
- Training hospital staff at all levels to support a more inclusive work environment for Black clinicians
- Creating initiatives that encourage hospitals to update and uphold codes of conduct to address discrimination

Work with Black Students at the Primary and Secondary Levels

- Creating training programs for Black K–12 students that include classroom visits, teacher training, and health pathway programs



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