



Text File

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Committee: City Council

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WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week was started by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, a Black women-led cross-sectoral alliance centering Black mothers to advocate, drive research, build power, and shift cultural paradigms for Black maternal health, rights, and justice; and,

WHEREAS, Black Mamas Matter Alliance is leading the fourth celebration of the national campaign, Black Maternal Health Week, from April 11 through 17, 2021, which focuses on building awareness on Black maternal health, activism, and community building; and,

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week intends to bring national attention to the maternal health crisis in the United States and the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing people; and,

WHEREAS, This week seeks to deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the United States, amplify community-driven policy, research, and care solutions; and,

WHEREAS, It strives to center the voices of Black mamas and birthing people, women, families, and stakeholders, as well as provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth, and reproductive justice; and,

WHEREAS, The campaign aims to enhance community organizing on Black maternal health; and,

WHEREAS, Black Mamas Matter Alliance will host the national Black Maternal Health Conference online April 16-17, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week is held during the month of April, which is federally recognized as National Minority Health Month, an initiative to advance health equity across the country on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women in the United States are 3 to 4 times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes; and,

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications, known as “maternal morbidities”, twice as often as white women; and,

WHEREAS, The high rates of maternal mortality among Black women span across income levels, education levels and socioeconomic status; and,

WHEREAS, racism and discrimination play a consequential role in maternal health care experiences and outcomes of Black birthing people; and,

WHEREAS, a fair and wide distribution of resources and birth options, especially with regard to reproductive health care services and maternal health programming, are critical to closing the racial gap in maternal health outcomes; and,

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Maternal Review Committee was established by Act 24 of 2018 to review all pregnancy-related deaths and provide recommendations to reduce preventable pregnancy-related deaths in Pennsylvania; and,

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Health published the report, “Pregnancy-Associated Deaths in Pennsylvania, 2013-2018” in December 2020 citing a 21.4% increase in pregnancy-associated death; and,

WHEREAS, The pregnancy-related death increased to 11.4 deaths per 100,000 live births from 2012 to 2016 and for Black women, the rate was 27.2 deaths per 100,000 live births during this time. Black women and birthing people were 2.4 times more likely to die due to pregnancy complications; and,

WHEREAS, As of 2018, Black women accounted for 23% of all pregnancy-related deaths in Pennsylvania while only accounting for 14% of births; and,

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh is the worst place for Black women's health outcomes among 42 cities with 100,000 Black women or more and in Allegheny County, from 2012-2015, the rate of Black women dying from pregnancy-related death is 3.7 times higher than white women; and,

WHEREAS, Black women have historically had the highest maternal mortality rates due to a combination of effects from institutional racism that have resulted in susceptibility to certain health conditions and lack of access to quality prenatal care; and,

WHEREAS, the United States ranks last globally amongst all developed nations in terms of maternal mortality; and,

WHEREAS, There is a great need for increased education, awareness, and solutions to eradicate disproportionate maternal mortality rates, and related adverse maternal health outcomes amongst Black women; and,

WHEREAS, The campaign and activities for Black Maternal Health Week serve to amplify the voices of Black mamas and center the values and traditions of the Reproductive and Birth Justice movements which aim to ensure that the Human Rights of Black women communities most impacted by reproductive oppression are protected and that Black women achieve and maintain access to a full range of comprehensive reproductive and maternal healthcare; and,

WHEREAS, Activities during Black Maternal Health Week are rooted in human rights, Reproductive Justice,

and Birth Justice frameworks; and,

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week 2021 events in Pittsburgh will include activities organized, sponsored and co-hosted by New Voices for Reproductive Justice including sponsorship of the national Black Maternal Health Conference, a COVID-19 Community Relief Initiative online distribution of diaper and menstrual products for Black mamas and birthing people and providing Black mamas, birthing people and doulas access to prenatal yoga classes in partnership with Yogamotif; and,

WHEREAS, Healthy Start Pittsburgh is the leading Black maternal health organization in the Greater Pittsburgh Region with a mission to improve maternal and child health and to reduce poor birth outcomes and infant mortality in Allegheny County will host Black Maternal Health Week activities including a statewide event, “Claiming Our Power, Resilience and Liberation” with keynote, Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, Founder and President of the National Birth Equity Collaborative on April 11, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, The California Black Women’s Health Project, Center for Reproductive Rights, Cityblock, Elvie, Health Connect One, JSI, Mama Rise Up, Merck for Mothers, National Association to Advance Black Birth, National Partnership for Women and Families, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Postpartum Support Virginia, Queen Village, Rhia Ventures, ROOTT, Shafia Monroe Consulting, SisterSong, Vintner’s Daughter, State Innovation Exchange and Wolomi are sponsors of Black Maternal Health Week 2021.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Pittsburgh City Council recognizes April 11-17, 2021, as “Black Maternal Health Week” in the City of Pittsburgh.