

# Cherished Futures for Black Moms & Babies

## Centering Black Women, Babies, and Families

In Los Angeles County, Black women and families continue to disproportionately experience higher rates of infant and maternal mortality and morbidity compared to other racial or ethnic groups.

### In Los Angeles County:

**3x**

Black babies are three times more likely than White babies to die before their first birthday.

**50%**

The rate of preterm birth among Black women is 50% higher than for White or Asian women.

**4x**

The rate of maternal mortality for Black women is nearly four times higher compared to White women.

Data show these inequities cannot be fully explained by factors such as income, education, or health status. Research points to systemic issues, including racism, toxic stress, and racial bias in health care as central drivers of these inequities.

## About Cherished Futures for Black Moms & Babies

Cherished Futures for Black Moms & Babies (Cherished Futures) — an initiative led by the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC), Communities Lifting Communities, and the Public Health Alliance of Southern California— is a unique, multi-sector collaborative effort to reduce Black infant deaths and improve patient experience and safety for Black mothers and birthing people in South Los Angeles, South Bay, and the Antelope Valley. Cherished Futures is generously sponsored by Health Net.

Guided by the data and grounded in Black women's experiences, Cherished Futures brings together decision-makers from local birthing hospitals, public health departments, health plans, and Black women from the priority communities to co-design systems-change solutions at three levels:



Clinical



Institutional



Community

## Building Solidarity: Uniting Key Leaders and Black Women to Advance Birth Equity

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Since its inception in 2019, Cherished Futures has charted new territory by bringing together traditionally siloed leaders to think boldly about systems change, develop new ideas, and build solidarity. The project has garnered widespread enthusiasm and participation from senior-level clinical executives and Black community leaders alike.

At its core, Cherished Futures aims to center the voices and lived experiences of Black women and birthing people to reduce these inequities, inform hospital quality improvement strategies, and ensure that Black women have a seat at the decision-making table as Community Advisors—a unique role that allows thought leaders to elevate the community perspective as a member of the hospital teams.

Cherished Futures is proudly aligned and working in partnership with the Los Angeles County African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative, which aims to reduce the Black-White infant mortality gap by 30% by 2023. Additionally, the Cherished Futures project team maintains an active collaborative relationship with many parallel birth equity initiatives in Los Angeles and throughout California to amplify the local and statewide collective impact.

### Cherished Futures Vision

Equitable community and clinical environments that support healthier, safer births for Black women, babies, and all birthing families in Los Angeles County.

### Creating a Lasting Impact in Los Angeles County

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Cherished Futures has established a proactive collaborative and is supporting pilot hospital implementation teams in the development of implementation plans to adopt culturally relevant clinical, organizational and community systems-change strategies.

The five hospitals participating in the current pilot cohort were carefully chosen and recruited after a series of extensive data and prioritization analyses, which examined five perinatal indicators from 30 birthing hospitals in Los Angeles County (hospitals with >5 African American preterm births) by race and ethnicity, zip code and payer. The invited hospitals participating in the current Cherished Futures pilot cohort include Antelope Valley Hospital, Cedars-Sinai, Centinela Hospital Medical Center, Dignity Health California Hospital Medical Center, and Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance. Collectively, these five hospitals accounted for one-third of all African American hospital births in Los Angeles County in 2016.

This capacity-building year concludes in December 2020 with each hospital team developing actionable, community-informed implementation plans with identified interventions at each system level. Each team will be prepared and ready to implement the selected strategies in the following Implementation Year.

## **Cherished Futures: A Look Ahead**

Over the next few years, Cherished Futures aims to catalyze enduring systemic shifts to advance birth equity in Los Angeles by:

- Building a cadre of multi-sector partners and hospitals that are knowledgeable about inequitable birth outcomes and are actively implementing systems-change improvement strategies informed by and in partnership with Black families in their service areas
- Changing the narratives about Black birthing outcomes in Los Angeles County
- Strengthening regional communication and collaboration between participating hospitals, health plans, and public health
- Demonstrating at least one area of improvement in outcome(s) at participating hospitals via qualitative or quantitative data
- Initiating trust-building and relationship development between hospitals, providers, and the Black birthing families they serve

## **About Communities Lifting Communities**

Communities Lifting Communities (CLC) is a regional community health improvement initiative led by the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) to reduce health disparities and improve community health in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

## **About the Public Health Alliance of Southern California**

The Public Health Alliance of Southern California (Alliance) is a coalition of the executive leadership of eight local health departments in Southern California. Collectively, Alliance members have statutory responsibility for the health of 50% of California's population. The Alliance advances multi-sector policy, systems and environmental change to improve upstream population health and equity.

