

State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, North Carolina continues to face high severe maternal morbidity rates for unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery that result in negative consequences to a woman's health; and

WHEREAS, maternal mortality and morbidity disparities persist in the United States, with pregnancy-related mortality rates among Black women more than three times higher than the rate among White women (49.4 vs. 14.9 deaths per 100,000 live births), reflecting ongoing systemic inequities in maternal health outcomes;

WHEREAS, national data continue to show that Black women experience disproportionately higher rates of pregnancy-related deaths and severe maternal complications compared with other racial and ethnic groups, remaining a major public health concern in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, access to maternity care remains uneven in many parts of North Carolina because of maternity care deserts and provider shortages, contributing to higher risks of maternal morbidity and mortality; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has continued implementation of its Perinatal Health Strategic Plan, aimed at improving maternal and infant health and the overall health and wellness of people of reproductive age across the state; and

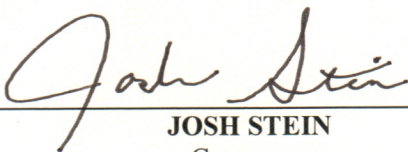
WHEREAS, throughout the week of April 11 – 17, 2026, local health departments, maternal health advocates, and community-based organizations will observe Black Maternal Health Week with community meetings, awareness campaigns, and educational sessions in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Public Health, Women, Infant, and Community Wellness Section; and

WHEREAS, the Women, Infant, and Community Wellness Section collaborates with partners across North Carolina to strengthen maternal health outcomes, including initiatives such as group prenatal care, education on maternal warning signs during the 12 weeks after birth, and efforts to improve access to perinatal and mental health providers; and

WHEREAS, these initiatives also focus on raising awareness of the disparities in Black maternal health in North Carolina and aim to ensure that all pregnant and postpartum women have access to high-quality, culturally competent prenatal and postpartum care;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim April 11 – 17, 2026, as **"BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK"** in North Carolina and commend its observance to all residents.





JOSH STEIN
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twenty-third day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.