

# Dane County Health Council and Partners: Announce Black Maternal and Child Health Alliance to lead local birth equity efforts

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**Madison** –The Dane County Health Council and its community partner the Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness announced today the formal launch of the **Black Maternal and Child Health Alliance of Dane County (BMCHA)**. The Alliance is the outgrowth of nearly three years of continuous work and collaboration between the Council and the Foundation to create a community-informed strategy and framework to improve the birth outcomes of Black mothers and babies in Dane County.

The mission of the Black Maternal and Child Health Alliance (BMCHA) is to transform birth outcomes in Dane County by identifying, informing and advancing strategies that improve the reproductive, maternal and newborn health of Dane County’s Black population.

The 21-member body is comprised of local Black women leaders, advocates, and community influencers. The group will be co-chaired by inaugural members Dr. Tiffany Green, Assistant Professor in the Departments of Population Health Sciences and Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Alia Stevenson, Chief Programs Officer with the Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness.

The Alliance, an independent, self-governing body, will host its first official meeting this September. A roundtable discussion with the BMCHA and the Dane County Health Council is scheduled for November where both groups will identify joint priorities and goals around the work already underway. Finally, the first annual

Wisconsin Black Maternal & Child Health Summit is scheduled for 2021.

“The Black Maternal & Child Health Alliance is comprised of Black women serving in important roles in health care, our community, and as decision-makers and knowledge experts. Our highest priority is to ensure that the health and wellbeing of Black mothers remains front and center,” stated Co-Chairs Green and Stevenson. “As the Alliance moves forward, we are pleased to join the Dane County Health Council as we work together to advance the health of Black mothers, babies and their families in this county.”

Presently, Black mothers in Dane County are more than twice as likely than white mothers to give birth to low birth weight infants, placing these babies at greater risk of significant health challenges and higher infant mortality rates. Wisconsin ranks first in the nation for Black infant mortality, and Black women in Wisconsin experience a pregnancy-related maternal mortality rate that is five times higher than that of their white counterparts.

“We are excited by the collective work we have done and continue to do to drive change in Dane County that advances the health and well-being of Black women and our families and community”, said Lisa-Peyton Caire, CEO and President of the Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness. We look forward to partnering with the Alliance and the Council as we continue to write a new and powerful narrative for Black maternal and child health in Dane County and to move Wisconsin from worst to best for Black women’s health.”

The launch of the Black Maternal and Child Health Alliance fulfills one of several community-informed recommendations outlined in the groundbreaking [Saving Our Babies report](#) published in April 2019 by the Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness partner EQT By Design. The report, completed after a 9-month community engagement process commissioned by the Health Council, was informed by over 300 Black women, men, and community members who were asked to identify root causes and solutions to improve Black birth outcomes in the County. Since the publishing of the report, The Foundation and EQT By Design have led the work to launch the Alliance, and continue to work with the Health Council to implement several of the goals of the ongoing Saving Our Babies effort.

“The Dane County Health Council is committed to continuing to center the voices of Black women. The knowledge and expertise the Alliance brings to the Council are key to identifying sustainable solutions to improve birth outcomes for babies born to

Black mothers in Dane County.” said Dr. Ken Loving, CEO of Access Community Health Centers.

The Dane County Health Council is a coalition of healthcare providers, government and nonprofits with a mission to eliminate gaps and barriers to optimal health and reduce disparities in health outcomes in Dane County. Council members include: Access Community Health Centers, Black Maternal and Child Health Alliance, Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin, Madison Metropolitan School District, Public Health Madison & Dane County, SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital, United Way of Dane County, UnityPoint Health-Meriter, and UW Health.