

Unequal Outcomes in Pregnancy and Childbirth



Penn Medicine
Center for Health Equity Advancement

What is it?

Friday, April 8th, 2022

Black as compared to White women are over 3 times more likely to die during pregnancy, giving birth, or in the period after giving birth (postpartum). This difference remains regardless of income or education and is due to structural racism and discrimination. Beyoncé and Serena Williams have spoken openly about their struggle to be heard during pregnancy and birth, and how bias among health care professionals impacts Black parents.

Why is it important?

In Philadelphia from 2013-2018, 73% of deaths related to pregnancy occurred among Black women even though they accounted for only 43% of births in that period. This inequality impacts someone we know, be it our family, friends, colleagues, or patients. Maternal and child health and wellbeing is a key measure of a healthy society. To advance equity and improve the health of our society, we must address these inequalities.

What you can do

- Work to educate both yourself and your colleagues about racial and ethnic disparities in your specialty.
- Consider how your biases could be affecting the way you respond to patient concerns.
 - If you notice a difference in patient treatment or outcomes, and need guidance on how to improve that disparity, reach out to the [Center for Health Equity Advancement for project support](#).

Learn more

- [Raising The Stakes To Advance Equity In Black Maternal Health](#)
- [Pregnancy-related deaths were already rising in the US. Then COVID arrived and made things worse.](#)
- [Healthy People 2020: Maternal, Infant and Child Health](#)
- Hear a [story](#) from Penn Medicine faculty, staff or students related to this topic (begin listening at 1:07).

[Click here to learn more and see the full schedule of HEW events!](#)