



## **BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH POSITION STATEMENT ACCESS TO QUALITY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE**

### **Background**

Black women disproportionately experience health disparities, economic inequity, and access to vital healthcare. Societal and health system factors contribute to high rates of poor health outcomes and maternal mortality for Black women, who are more likely to experience barriers to obtaining quality care and often face racial discrimination throughout their lives. The lack of adequate healthcare results in high rates of maternal death related to pregnancy or childbirth.

### **Black Women and Reproductive Justice**

Recent studies show the maternal death rate among Black women is three to four times more than white women, at 44.0 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 17.9, and three times more than Hispanic women at 12.6. Black women are less likely to have access to quality prenatal healthcare resulting in greater preterm births, lower birthweight, and increased infant and maternal mortality.

Black women should receive health care that is respectful, culturally competent, safe, and of the highest quality. Too often, Black women are subject to discrimination in the healthcare field with 22 percent reporting discrimination when going to the doctor or clinic.

**The National Coalition of 100 Black Women advocates** that health equity is key to economic and social empowerment. Quality healthcare must be affordable and accessible to all.

Public policies and medical practice should endeavor to eradicate cultural biases and discrimination in medical practice and medical education, increase provider diversity in maternity care hold individual providers and hospital systems accountable if they fail to provide unbiased, high-quality, evidence-based care.

**NCBW** supports paid leave for Black women to take care of their own health needs and to have time to care for their children. Only 30 percent of Black mothers are both eligible for and able to afford to take unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act. Lawmakers should pursue robust, comprehensive paid leave policies that are accessible and affordable for all working people.

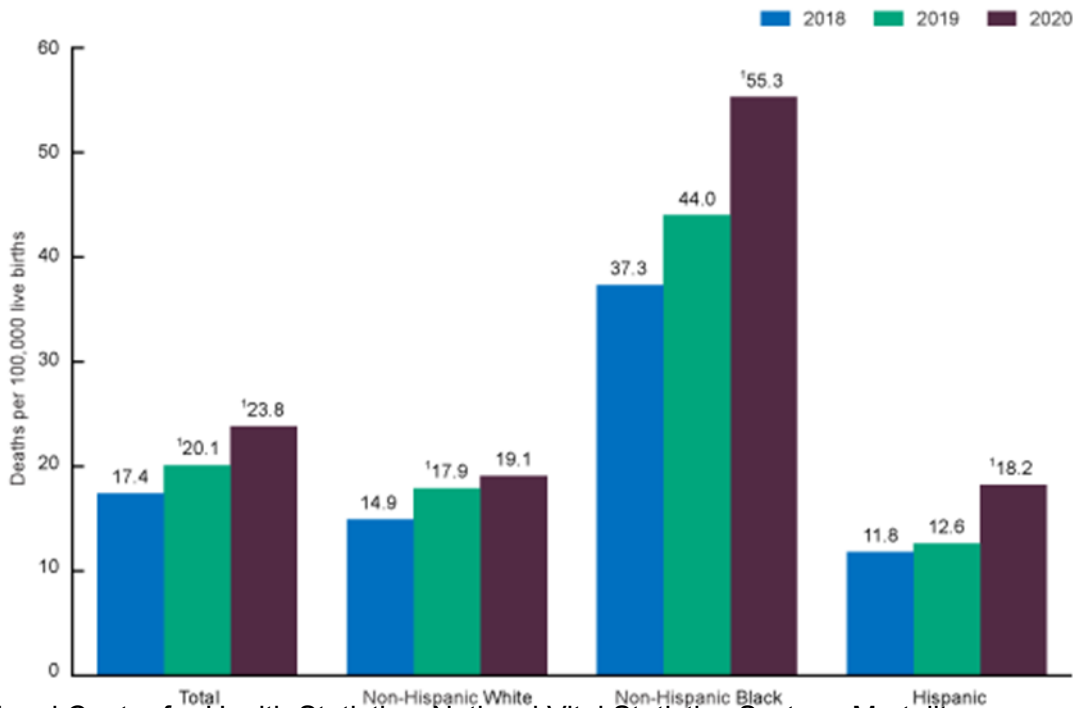
**NCBW** supports reproductive justice as a human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent children in safe and sustainable communities.

**NCBW** supports **H.R.3755**, the Women's Health Protection Act of 2021. The legislation seeks to protect women's reproductive rights; women's right to determine whether to have a child or not have a child.



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Maternal mortality rates, by race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2018–2020



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

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