

Resolution of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners

Honoring Black Maternal Health Week

WHEREAS, Black women nationwide, regardless of income or education level, are three to four times more likely to die from *preventable* pregnancy-related complications, and Black infants are two to three times more likely to die during their first year of life; and

WHEREAS, the maternal mortality rate in North Carolina doubled between 2019 and 2021, exacerbated by the global pandemic, while NC maintains the 11th highest maternal mortality rate in the country; and

WHEREAS, 39% of Black women in North Carolina receive late or no prenatal care, compared to only 24% of white women, meaning they are less likely to be diagnosed and treated for pregnancy-related complications such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and fetal conditions; and

WHEREAS, this year's national theme for Black History Month is "African Americans and Labor", which focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds – free and unfree, skilled and unskilled, vocational and voluntary, intersect with the collective experiences of Black people; and

WHEREAS, as many as 50% of Black women experiencing maternal mental health disorder symptoms fail to receive adequate help; and

WHEREAS, one in five babies in North Carolina are birthed to Black women, so this issue is consequential for our entire community; and

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week was founded by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance to increase awareness around the state of Black Maternal Health and promote activism and investment in solutions; and

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that the services of diverse birth workers, health advocates, community organizations, and healthcare providers are a crucial component of eliminating disparities, enhancing Black maternal safety and improving birth and health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, we recognize and uplift community-based responses to addressing this crisis, and we promote initiatives that reduce Black maternal morbidity and mortality such as doula services, midwifery services, peer support, mutual aid and mental wellness support; and

WHEREAS, Black women deserve to have beautiful pregnancy and birth experiences with access to care of their choice through being empowered and resourced to make informed decisions based on their needs; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the urgency in addressing the Black maternal health crisis in Chatham and across North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chatham County Board of Commissioners that April 11th through April 17th of 2025 is proclaimed as Black Maternal Health Week in Chatham County and call upon all residents, community agencies, faith groups, medical facilities, elected leaders, and businesses to increase their participation in our efforts to support families, thereby preventing child abuse and strengthening the communities in which we live.

Adopted, this the 17th day of March 2025.

Karen Howard, Chair

ATTEST:

Jenifer K Johnson, Clerk to the Board

Integrity – Respect – Collaboration – Community – Equity – Service – Accountability