



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK AND MINORITY HEALTH MONTH IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, the month of April is National Minority Health Month, a month-long initiative to advance health equity across the country on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities and highlight the importance of improving their health while reducing health disparities; and

WHEREAS, in solidarity with National Minority Health Month, the week of April 11-17 is Black Maternal Health Week in the United States, originated by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, and officially recognized by the White House by proclamation, it is a week of awareness, activism, and community building intended to deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the US; amplify community-driven policy, research, and care solutions; center the voices of Black Mamas, women, families, and stakeholders; provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth and reproductive justice; and enhance community organizing on Black maternal health; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme for Black Maternal Health Week is **"Our Bodies STILL Belong to Us: Reproductive Justice NOW!"**; and

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States experience unacceptably poor maternal health outcomes, including disproportionately high rates of death related to pregnancy or childbirth, and are three to four times more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death than white women, numbers that are mirrored in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, a person's race should never determine their health outcomes, and pregnancy and childbirth should be safe for all. However, for far too many Black women, safety and equity have been tragically denied due to generations of systemic disadvantages in health care delivery and health care access, including lack of access to health care information and services, lack of insurance coverage, denial of therapeutics, limited access to contraceptive services, and cultural biases and discrimination in medical practice and medical education; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2022 Illinois Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans report, the crisis of non-Hispanic Black/African American infant and maternal mortality and morbidity in states, especially Illinois, mirrors the larger trends seen across the country. Non-Hispanic Black/African American women in Illinois are about three times as likely to experience a pregnancy-related death as White and Hispanic women, and Non-Hispanic Black/African American women also have the highest severe maternal morbidity (SMM) rate at 132.4 per 10,000 live births, more than two times the rate of non-Hispanic White women and significantly higher than Asian and Hispanic women; and

WHEREAS, both societal and health system factors contribute to the 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; and

WHEREAS, public policies and medical practice should incentivize providing patient-centered care that focuses on Black women's individualized needs, including non-clinical social needs. Moreover, policies should endeavor to eradicate cultural biases and discrimination in medical practice and medical education, increase provider diversity in maternity care and hold individual providers and hospital systems accountable if they fail to provide unbiased, high-quality, evidence-

based care; and

WHEREAS, the origin of National Minority Health Month was the 1915 establishment of National Negro Health Week by Booker T. Washington, and in 2002, National Minority Health Month received support from the U.S. Congress with a concurrent resolution; and

WHEREAS, African American & Latinx communities have endured historically bad treatment with our healthcare system, and National Minority Health Month is a time to re-double our efforts to improve this system by listening to their concerns and work to build the trust that was lost over generations of poor treatment; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme for National Minority Health Month is “**Be the Source for Better Health: Improving Health Outcomes Through Our Cultures, Communities, and Connections**”, to highlight the important role of diverse communities, organizations, and individuals in organizations in advancing health equity and reducing health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities and other diverse populations; and

WHEREAS, when patients are provided with culturally and linguistically appropriate information, they are empowered to create healthier outcomes for themselves and their communities; and

WHEREAS, this Honorable Body wishes to promote and raise awareness of National Minority Health Month and Black Maternal Health Week in Cook County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the more than 5.2 million residents of Cook County, do hereby take this opportunity to acknowledge National Minority Health Month and Black Maternal Health Week; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in conjunction with National Minority Health Month, that the month of April be hereby declared Minority Health Month in the County of Cook, and the week of April 11-17 be declared Black Maternal Health Week in the County of Cook; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body.