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# FEDERAL POLICY LANDSCAPE – BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH

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The Century Foundation is a progressive, independent think tank that conducts research, develops solutions, and drives policy change to make people's lives better. We pursue economic, racial and gender equity across a number of policy issues. We were founded in 1919 by the progressive business leader Edward Filene.

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Defining Structural Racism
- How Does Structural Racism Manifest In Care?
- Maternal Mortality Disparities
- Racism Drives Poor Maternal Health
- Reproductive Justice (RJ) Framework
- Developing Solutions Through RJ
- Maternal Health Bills Introduced In 116<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Congress
- Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act
- Maternal CARE Act
- Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage
- COVID-19 Safe Birthing Act
- Actions By The Biden-Harris Administration
- Further Actions To Advance Black Maternal Health
- Suggested Readings By Dr. Taylor

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# STRUCTURAL RACISM

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A system where public policies, institutional practices, and cultural representations work to reinforce and perpetuate racial inequity.

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## HOW DOES STRUCTURAL RACISM MANIFEST IN CARE?

Health provider shortages  
and lower-quality  
hospitals concentrated in  
neighborhoods with  
majority POC.

Racial bias and  
stereotyping of POC by  
health care providers.

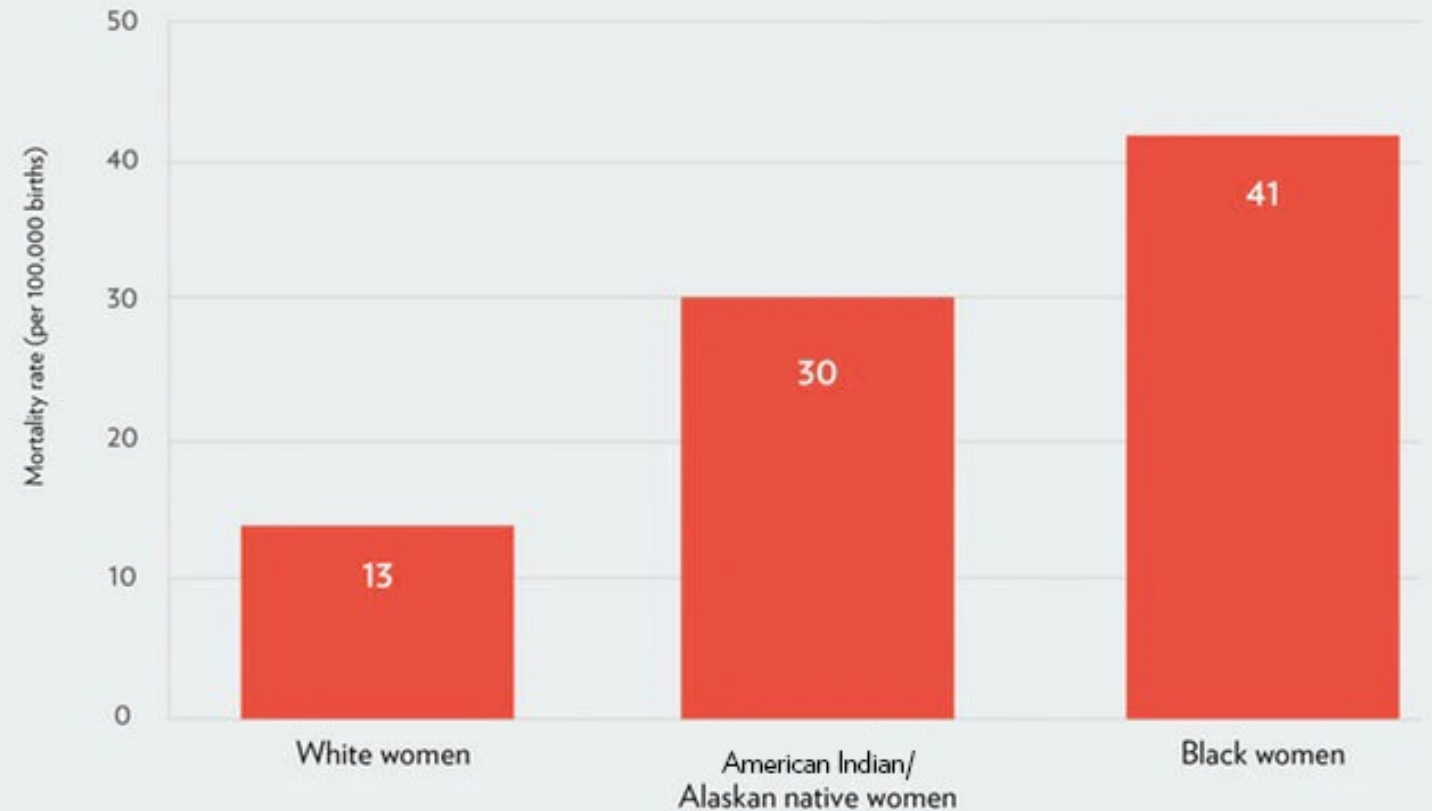
Differential treatment  
practices and  
management of pain.

Lack of culturally  
responsive care.

Efforts to undermine or  
sabotage publicly-funded  
health insurance  
programs such as  
Medicaid.

# MATERNAL MORTALITY DISPARITIES

## MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE



Source: Emily E. Petersen et al., "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths—United States, 2007–2016," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 68, no. 35 (September 6, 2019): 762–65.



# RACISM DRIVES POOR MATERNAL HEALTH

- Research suggests that the cumulative stress of racism and gender oppression undermine the health and well-being of Black women
- Fueled by predominantly white power structures that perpetuate power imbalances and lack of empathy and respect for Black birthing people
- Solutions must be grounded in social justice frameworks that are intentionally designed to address these power imbalances

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# **REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE (RJ) FRAMEWORK**

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A human rights-based structured approach that addresses the intersecting systems of oppression that prevent marginalized people, primarily women of color, from achieving complete bodily autonomy and parenting with dignity.

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## DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS THROUGH RJ

Recognizes a woman's ability to determine her own reproductive destiny

Recognizes reproductive freedom as linked to the conditions within a birthing person's community

Centers women and birthing people of color and their unique experiences

Health outcomes and access to health care are central factors that cannot be isolated from social issues such as economic opportunity, exposure to violence, and safe/affordable housing

## HOW MANY MATERNAL HEALTH BILLS INTRODUCED?

3 Jan. 2019 – 3 Jan. 2021

116th Congress (January 3, 2019 -  
January 3, 2021) = 31

117th Congress (January 3, 2021 -  
January 3, 2023) = 26

3 Jan. 2021 – 3 Jan. 2023



# BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH MOMNIBUS ACT

- Lead sponsors = Representatives Lauren Underwood (IL) and Alma Adams (NC); Senator Cory Booker (NJ)
- Comprehensive package of 12 bills
- Addresses almost every dimension of the Black maternal health crisis
- Invests in: community-based organizations; SDOH; maternal vaccinations; climate impacts on pregnancy and childbirth; care for veterans and incarcerated birthing people; maternal mental health; and more



# MATERNAL CARE ACT

- Lead sponsors = Representative Alma Adams (NC) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)
- Provides funding for implicit bias training
- Tests innovations in integrated health care services for pregnant people through pregnancy medical homes



# EXTENDING POSTPARTUM MEDICAID COVERAGE

- American Rescue Plan Act
- Other key legislation
  - Healthy MOMMIES Act
  - MOMMA's Act (not yet reintroduced in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress)
  - Helping MOMS Act (not reintroduced in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress)



# COVID-19 SAFE BIRTHING ACT

- Lead sponsor = Representative Ayanna Pressley (NJ)
- Ensures pregnant and birthing people have a doula/support person and loved one in health care settings
- Expands access to maternal telehealth services for Medicaid enrollees
- Extends Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage to one year
- Ensures access to free COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccination for all pregnant and birthing people, regardless of insurance status



## ACTIONS BY THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION

- Black Maternal Health Week Proclamation
- Approval of Section 1115 waivers to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage
- Increased investments in maternal health through the American Families Plan, the President's budget, and other vehicles
- Focus on implicit bias training, expanding maternity care among rural populations, and addressing racial disparities
- Health care expansions under the American Rescue Plan and health care EO
- Racial equity EO



## **FURTHER ACTION TO ADVANCE MATERNAL HEALTH**

- Ensure mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage for at least 1 year w/ generous FMAP increase to states
- Implement laws and policies that center the health and social needs of Black women and birthing people
- Invest in anti-racism training for health care providers





## SUGGESTED READINGS BY DR. TAYLOR

- *Eliminating Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Mortality: A Comprehensive Policy Blueprint* (Center for American Progress)
- *Structural Racism and Maternal Health Among Black Women* (Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics)
- *Promoting Better Maternal Health Outcomes by Closing the Medicaid Postpartum Coverage Gap* (TCF)
- *This Mother's Day, Moms Deserve Solutions to Help Them Recover During the Pandemic and Beyond* (TCF)
- *Reintroduction of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus: Cause for Celebration, Call to Action* (TCF)



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# THANK YOU!



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