Preterm birth is the leading cause of death for babies in the U.S. under 1 year of age. Black women—regardless of their socioeconomic status or education level—have a 52% higher risk of preterm birth than White women. This gap is not closing.

The preterm birth rate among Black women in California is 52% higher than the rate of White women.

**Long-Term Health Effects**
Prematurity (*born before 37 weeks*) can lead to long-term health problems. These include learning disabilities, behavior issues, dental problems, asthma, infections, and vision and hearing loss.

**Did You Know?**
Black college graduates have poorer birth outcomes than White women who did not finish high school.

**Cost of Preterm Birth**
The cost associated with U.S. premature births is a staggering $26.2 billion per year. Each preterm baby results in an additional $58,917 in maternity and newborn costs.

Sources: California Department of Public Health 2016 Birth Statistical Master File, 2015 Birth Cohort File and www.marchofdimes.org
COMMUNITY BIRTH PLAN TASK FORCE
Reducing Black Premature Births in California

**CHALLENGE:** The preterm birth rate among Black women in California is 52 percent higher than the rate of White women.

**GOAL:** Develop, pilot and implement a Community Birth Plan uniting the Black community, hospitals, perinatal health care providers, public health and statewide organizations resulting in a reduction of Black preterm births to 8.1 percent by 2020 and 5.5 percent by 2030.

**BACKGROUND**
In September 2017, the California Department of Public Health’s Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division joined forces with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health and March of Dimes to host a summit designed to kick-start the development of a comprehensive Community Birth Plan that will provide guiding principles for reducing Black premature births in Los Angeles County. Parents, providers, public health agencies, hospitals, and faith and community leaders gathered to gain greater knowledge of the issue, and prioritized evidence-based strategies for preventing Black preterm births.

**OUR PLAN**
A task force of community partners has developed a Community Birth Plan to galvanize select birthing hospitals and their community partners around evidence-based health improvement activities that improve birth outcomes. These are our strategies:

- **Improve the quality of care for Black women,** by maximizing each encounter to teach preterm birth prevention strategies and improve the Black patient experience within hospitals.

- **Implement evidence-based and culturally appropriate clinical interventions** in the preconception, prenatal, postpartum and interconception period to reduce Black preterm birth rates.

- **Engage health plans in implementing reimbursements** and other activities to reduce preterm births.

- **Inform the community about Black preterm birth rates** and unite them around health improvement activities that improve birth outcomes.

- **Build a Fatherhood Preterm Birth Initiative** to inform dads and get their help in improving outcomes.

**OUR PARTNERS**

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<td>iDREAM for Racial Health Equity</td>
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<td>CDPH Center for Family Health</td>
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<td>Children’s Institute Inc.</td>
<td>Mrs. Rosa Robinson, Community and Faith-based resident</td>
<td>University of California, San Francisco</td>
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October 2018