**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**H. 4265**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

House Resolution

Sponsors: Rep. Garvin

Document Path: LC-0264PH-JN23.docx

Introduced in the House on April 5, 2023

Adopted by the House on April 5, 2023

Summary: Black Maternal Health Week

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 4/5/2023 House Introduced and adopted (House Journal‑page 87)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4265&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/05/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4265_20230405.docx)

A house RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE THE WEEK OF APRIL 11 THROUGH APRIL 17, 2023, AS “BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK” IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN ORDER TO BRING STATEWIDE ATTENTION TO THE MATERNAL HEALTH CRISIS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY AND TO THE IMPORTANCE OF REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY AMONG BLACK BIRTHING PEOPLE.

Whereas, the sixth National Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) campaign, founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, is a week of awareness, activism, and community building; and

Whereas, the BMHW 2023 theme, “Our Bodies Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy”, speaks to Black women’s unassailable right to live freely, safely, and joyfully; and

Whereas, BMHW serves as a national platform for Black women‑led entities and other members of the diaspora, to enhance community organization on Black maternal health via community conversations, events, and outreach; as well as efforts on maternal health, reproductive justice (which was established by the Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice), and birth equity; and

Whereas, it is fitting and proper during Black Maternal Health Week to recognize the tremendous impact of human rights, birth justice, and birth justice frameworks; and

Whereas, BMHW is intended to increase awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the U.S., the root causes of poor maternal health outcomes, and community‑driven policies and programming, and care solutions; and

Whereas, increasing awareness about how to improve access to dignified, quality maternal health care across the State, expanding access to doula care services for women publicly and privately insured, and increasing low Medicaid reimbursement rates for maternity care services performed by OBGYNs and midwives must be addressed to eliminate the State’s maternity‑care deserts to provide life‑saving care for moms and a healthier start for babies; and

Whereas, Black midwives, doulas, perinatal health workers, community‑based organizations, and other birth workers, provide holistic maternal care, in spite of being faced with structural and legal barriers to licensure, reimbursement, and provision to provide care; and

Whereas, a recent report released by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that in 2021, the U.S. had one of the worst rates of maternal mortality in the nation’s history: a forty percent increase from 2020; and

Whereas, Black women are fifty‑five percent more likely than all other women to deliver prematurely; and

Whereas, between 2014 and 2018, the maternal mortality rate in South Carolina was 2.6 times higher for Black and other women versus white women (43.3. vs. 16.4 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, respectively) and South Carolina is among the top ten states for highest maternal mortality in the nation; and

Whereas, Black women in the United States suffer from life threatening pregnancy complications, known as “maternal morbidities”, twice as often as white women; and

Whereas, maternal mortality rates in the United States are among the highest in the developed world and are increasing according to the Center for Disease Control; and

Whereas, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among affluent countries, in part because of the disproportionate mortality rate of Black mothers; and

Whereas, these deaths have devastating effects on Black children and families, and the vast majority are entirely preventable, through assertive efforts to ensure Black birthing people can access information, birth worker services, and supports to make their own informed healthcare decisions particularly around pregnancy and childbearing; and

Whereas, it is imperative that there be greater equitable access to prevention, early identification, and effective treatment services that are delivered in a culturally and trauma informed care setting to improve Black birthing people's chronic health conditions and maternal health; and

Whereas, the high rates of maternal mortality among Black birthing people span across all income, education, and socioeconomic levels; and

Whereas, a fair distribution of resources, especially with regard to reproductive health care services and maternal health programming, is critical to closing the maternal health racial disparity gap; and

Whereas, even as there is growing concern about improving access to mental health services, Black birthing people are least likely to have access to mental health screenings, treatment, and support before, during, and after pregnancy. Maternal mental health has been listed by the CDC as a leading underlying cause of pregnancy‑related death; and

Whereas, perinatal community‑based models of care offer enhanced care and support throughout the pre‑pregnancy to postpartum spectrum, including doula and midwifery childbirth services to pregnant women who face barriers to care; and

Whereas, Black Maternal Health Week is an opportunity to fight to end maternal mortality locally and globally. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize the week of April 11 through April 17, 2023, as “Black Maternal Health Week” in South Carolina in order to bring statewide attention to the maternal health crisis in the Black community and to the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black birthing people.

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