

Statement for the Record

Submitted by

The Premier Inc. healthcare alliance

House Committee on Oversight and Reform

Birthing While Black: Examining America's Black Maternal Health Crisis

May 6, 2021

The Premier healthcare alliance appreciates the opportunity to submit a statement for the record on the House Oversight and Reform Committee titled "*Birthing While Black: Examining America's Black Maternal Health Crisis*," scheduled for May 6, 2021. We applaud Chairwoman Maloney and Committee member Kelly for co-chairing this hearing to examine how to address the factors that are contributing to maternal mortality and morbidity for Black women.

The Premier healthcare alliance is a leading healthcare improvement company, uniting an alliance of more than 4,100 U.S. hospitals and health systems and approximately 200,000 other providers and organizations to transform healthcare. With integrated data and analytics, collaboratives, supply chain solutions, and consulting and other services, Premier enables better care and outcomes at a lower cost. Premier plays a critical role in the rapidly evolving healthcare industry, collaborating with members to co-develop long-term innovations that reinvent and improve the way care is delivered to patients nationwide.

Every new mother and child deserve the best beginning possible, whether they live in the suburbs, cities or in a rural setting. Yet, mothers are at higher risk of dying during childbirth in the U.S. than in any other industrialized nation. Premier applauds the Committee's effort to bring to the forefront the urgent need to make America a safer place for Black women to give birth.

Maternal care improvement must start with reliable data that identifies the root causes. The lack of standardized outcome measurement and collection of complete, actionable data on maternal mortality and morbidity has been a persistent obstacle to reversing poor maternal-infant health trends in the US. To address this problem head-on, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Office of Women's Health](#) (OWH) has tapped into Premier's extensive data to understand why the disparate maternal outcomes occur. Then, Premier will be using those insights to test and scale proven practices to improve maternal-infant care across hospitals nationwide.

Premier is leveraging data representing 25 percent of all U.S. births to understand what is driving deaths and harm to new mothers and newborns.

According to Premier's [latest analysis](#):

- A 55 percent decrease in maternal deaths during hospital delivery for Black women from 2008-2019 suggests the disparity gap between Black and white women for delivery-related deaths has substantially narrowed. U.S. hospitals showed a 17 percent decrease in delivery-related maternal deaths for *all* races between 2008-2019, indicating hospitals are making progress at the time of delivery.
- While this is a positive development, severe maternal morbidity (SMM) continues to rise and disproportionately affects Black women, who have an 84 percent higher SMM rate than white women. There are several factors that occur outside of the hospital during pre- and postpartum care that could be influencing overall maternal mortality and morbidity trends. The greater instances of SMM are a

likely indicator of post-discharge maternal mortality, with CDC data showing that the mortality rate within 42 days of pregnancy increased 15 percent between 2018 and 2019.

- Black women have higher rates for heart failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome, eclampsia, acute renal failure, sepsis and blood transfusions. Blood transfusions are the leading indicator of SMM and associated with higher likelihood of mortality.

These findings underscore the need for a standardized method to collect maternal-infant data, measure outcomes, adjust care and scale proven practices across hospitals nationwide.

To get there:

- OWH is using Premier's standardized data to analyze the risk factors influencing maternal-infant morbidity and mortality.
- Premier is uniting a cohort of 200+ hospitals across the country – particularly those that serve vulnerable populations – to reduce health disparities; scale standardized, evidence-based practices; and reliably measure associated outcomes.
- Premier is working with partners like MoMMA's Voices and the National Birth Equity Collaborative to incorporate all patient's perspectives.
- Premier is taking steps to better connect the inpatient and ambulatory care mothers and infants receive to get at another unexplored problem area.

With data, evidence and insights from hospitals, outpatient settings and mothers, Premier and OWH's efforts will reduce harm and deaths – and make the U.S. the safest place to have a baby.

Thank you again for your attention on policy solutions to address the factors that are contributing to disparities maternal mortality and morbidity for Black mothers. If you have any questions regarding Premier's data or initiatives or need more information, please contact Blair Childs at blair_childs@premierinc.com or 202-879-8000.