

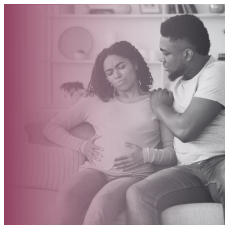
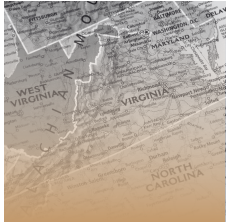
# Black Maternal Health Week Declaration

SJ 23, Sen. Aird; HJ 44, Del. Bolling

## FACT SHEET



**Maternal health and mortality disparities are a pervasive issue in the United States. Virginia is no exception.**



- Every pregnancy-related death is tragic, especially because **more than 80% of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable.** Recognizing urgent maternal warning signs, providing timely treatment, and delivering respectful, quality care can prevent many of these pregnancy-related deaths.
- **Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women.**
- Multiple factors contribute to these disparities, such as **variations in the quality of healthcare, underlying chronic conditions, structural racism, and unconscious bias.**
- **Social determinants of health** prevent many people from racial and ethnic minority groups from having fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health.
- Richmond, Virginia, has declared a Black Maternal Health Week, **but the state as a whole isn't doing well when it comes to maternal health disparities.**
- Virginia's maternal mortality rate **more than doubled** between 2018 and 2020, from 37.1 deaths to 86.6 deaths per 100,000.
- In Virginia, Black women experience higher rates of pregnancy-associated deaths compared to their White counterparts. **Black infants are dying before their first birthday at a rate almost double the rate of other babies.**

### **What will Black Maternal Health Week will increase and help us improve as a Commonwealth?**

Declaring a state-wide annual Black Maternal Health Week will help raise awareness, coordinate programming, push for sustained and sustainable positive changes to reduce maternal health and mortality disparities, and state unequivocally that the experience of Black mothers in this Commonwealth matters and is a priority to this legislature and administration.

### **The 2-Sentence Talking Points:**

Held annually on April 11-17, Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) is a week-long campaign founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance. BMHW builds awareness, activism, and community-building to amplify the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of Black Mamas and birthing people.