



Knox County Health Department

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KCHD recognizes Black Maternal Health Week

Knoxville, Tenn. — The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is celebrating Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) by encouraging the community to engage in conversations and activities focused on the Black maternal health crisis. In collaboration with the Africana Studies Department at the University of Tennessee, the Knox Birth Equity Alliance presents Knoxville's Inaugural Celebration of BMHW.

"We are proud and excited to be part of the inaugural celebration," said Adrien Jones, Public Health Educator with KCHD. "By giving a voice to members of the community to learn more about Black maternal health, we're raising awareness and building a foundation to address the disparities that Black women and children face."

Black women are 3 - 5 times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women and Black babies have an infant mortality rate almost double compared to the U.S. average.

The Black Maternal Health Week events are as follows:

- The kickoff event will take place Sunday, April 10, at The Change Center. Panelists will discuss the Black Maternal Health Crisis and the role birth workers play in improving birth outcomes. In addition, Wanda Irving will share her story of Dr. Shalon Irving, a CDC epidemiologist and lieutenant commander in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps who died shortly after giving birth.
- The taste and paint event, *Amplifying the Voices of Black Mamas and Babies* will be held April 13 at the Frieson Black Cultural Center. It will feature food from local Black-owned businesses and will include a celebratory candlelight vigil to honor Black mothers and babies whom we've lost.
- The conversation continues April 21 at the UT Student Union, discussing historical, cultural, and medical perspectives on Black maternal health from academics and professionals from the University of Tennessee and the Knox County Health Department.

Those who are interested in participating in these events, please visit www.knoxcounty.org/health/birthequity to register.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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