

SYSTEM ACTOR:

Medical and Health Education Programs

This document describes actions from the [Birth Equity Action Map](#) that medical and health education programs can take to advance birth equity, as well as potential partners and the barriers to change each action addresses. We define medical and health education programs as academic institutions dedicated to the education and training of future physicians, nurses, public health professionals, and other allied health professionals. They play a foundational role in shaping the medical and public health profession by instilling knowledge, clinical skills, and ethical practices in their students. Beyond education, they also frequently contribute to medical research and influence health care policies and practices. **Click [here](#) to explore these medical and health education program actions in the interactive Birth Equity Action Map.**



ACTION

DESCRIPTION

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

BARRIER(S) TO CHANGE BEING ADDRESSED

Combat bias through training, education, and policy^{3,4}

Combat bias through workforce training, education, and hospital-level policy change. Specifically, this might look like:

- Updating nursing and medical school curriculum
- Offering trainings (in medical schools and to current providers) that focus on protecting birthing parent autonomy, addressing racial biases, and promoting respectful maternity care

Health systems, Hospitals, State and local health agencies, Professional medical associations

System Structure: Lack of support for diverse birthing workforce

Mental Model: Persistent implicit bias among providers and lack of empathy towards pregnant people with systemically marginalized identities



ACTION	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	BARRIER(S) TO CHANGE BEING ADDRESSED
<p>Ensure equitable, trauma-informed, patient-centered care^{1,3,4}</p>	<p>Ensure equitable, trauma-informed, patient-centered care is provided and rooted in reproductive justice. Specifically, this might look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community-led governance structures within health systems • Invest in reproductive justice informed peer-to-peer, and community health worker programs • Train providers to deliver respectable maternity care, including respect for the full range of birthing options and patient autonomy • Provide access to peer counselors and lactation specialists to support human milk feeding • Establish breastfeeding-friendly spaces and adhere to the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. 	<p>Hospitals, Payer, Health systems</p>	<p>System Structure: Extent to which federal and state governments prioritize maternal and infant health equity</p> <p>System Structure: Extent to which federal and state governments prioritize maternal and infant health equity</p> <p>System Structure: Hospital systems based on the “average” individual, not taking into account the diverse needs and wants of individual families</p> <p>Mental Model: The focus on individual care, rather than in the family/community context</p>
<p>Recruit, train, and support diverse provider workforce^{2,3,5}</p>	<p>Recruit, train, and support a diverse community-based birthing provider workforce, including doulas, midwives, lactation consultants, and perinatal mental health specialists. This might include developing interdisciplinary clinical training models and empowering clients and community members to join the birth equity ecosystem through scholarship opportunities, training, and hiring.</p>	<p>Community-based organizations, Private funders, Hospitals, Health systems, Legislators</p>	<p>System Structure: Lack of support for diverse birthing workforce</p>

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Sources

Actions were synthesized from a two-part Systems Mapping to Advance Birth Equity workshop with 48 diverse actors representing federal, state, local, community, and family birth equity partners as well as the following recommended recent sources that have called for specific actions to advance birth equity.

1. Black Mamas Matter Alliance (2023). Black Mamas Matter: In Policy and Practice: A policy agenda for the Black maternal health, rights, and justice movement.
2. Institute for Medicaid Innovation (2023). Innovation in Perinatal and Child Health in Medicaid.
3. National Birth Equity Systems Mapping Workshop (2023). AMCHP Virtual Workshop, May and June 2023.
4. National Partnership for Women and Families (2023). Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence.
5. New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute and The Burke Foundation (2022). Delivering Better Care: Midwifery Practice in New Jersey.

Participating Organizations (in the workshop or feedback sessions)

- Alliance for Early Success
- Birthing Cultural Rigor, LLC
- BirthMatters
- Black Mamas ATX
- CityMatCH
- Family Solutions: A Program of the SC Office of Rural Health
- Funders for Birth Justice and Equity
- Georgetown University Center for Children and Families
- Giving Austin Labor Support
- Greater Newark Health Care Coalition
- Hand to Hold
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia
- HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies
- Intermountain Health RMOMS Program
- Mama Sana Vibrant Woman
- Mamatoto Village
- March of Dimes
- Maternal Health Equity Collaborative
- Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
- Merck for Mothers
- Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
- National Healthy Start Association
- National Institute of Children's Health Quality
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- Our Journ3i
- Philadelphia Department of Public Health
- Preeclampsia Foundation
- Rhode Island Department of Health
- Sedgwick County Health Department
- St. Joseph County Department of Health
- Starting Out Right
- The BEE Collective
- The Reilly Group
- Trenton Health Team
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition
- University of Washington's Parent-Child Assistance Program

