

BARRIER TO CHANGE:

→ **Resistance to including doulas and midwives in care teams**

This document describes actions from the [Birth Equity Action Map](#) that can help to shift mental models that resist fully including doulas and midwives in care teams, which was identified as a barrier to change using the [Iceberg Model of Systems Thinking](#). Click [here](#) to view these actions in the interactive Birth Equity Action Map.



ACTION



DESCRIPTION



RESPONSIBLE SYSTEM ACTORS

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE SYSTEM ACTORS
<p>Develop messaging that creates buy-in and empathy</p>	<p>Develop messaging (e.g. social media, mass communications, organization-level) that humanizes and grows empathy for the birthing experience while also sharing evidence for different methods of giving birth and different provider types. Specifically, this might look like developing and testing targeted messaging to create buy-in across groups for equity strategies (including respectful maternity care) or disseminating information on the benefits of different provider types (e.g., midwifery). This should include attention to the political climate and intentionality regarding compelling language use.</p>	<p>State and local health agencies, National non-profits, Federal agencies, Professional medical associations</p>
<p>Fully integrate doulas and midwives into birthing care teams^{1,3,5}</p>	<p>Fully integrate doulas and midwives into care teams by assessing and changing policies limiting their involvement, developing strong partnerships between health systems and community-based organizations, and supporting doula/midwife cooperatives and training programs.</p> <p>This must include attention to unintended consequences such as the prioritization of doulas and midwives associated with health systems over community-based doulas.</p>	<p>Community-based organizations, Health systems, Hospitals, Payers, Professional medical associations</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