

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM20.32	ACTION			Ward: All
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Declaring April 11 to 17, 2025 as Black Maternal Health Week in the City of Toronto - by Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley, recommends that:

1. City Council formally declare April 11 – 17, 2025 as Black Maternal Health Week in the City of Toronto.

Summary

The purpose of this Motion is to declare April 11 to 17, 2025 as Black Maternal Health Week in Toronto. This week will focus on raising awareness about Black maternal health, supporting Black-led initiatives, and encouraging community involvement. [The Black Health Plan for Ontario](#) seeks to enhance Black maternal health by providing equitable access to prenatal care and culturally competent services and it highlights the need for data collection to better understand and address health disparities.

Toronto is home to a vibrant and diverse Black community that faces unique socio-economic and cultural challenges. From the 2021 Census, 10% of Torontonians identify as Black. In our city, Black maternal health is often overlooked due to limited data on maternal health outcomes, systemic anti-Black racism, and a lack of targeted public initiatives. [Research](#) shows that Black pregnant people experience higher rates of stillbirths, and poor maternal and infant outcomes such as preterm birth, preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, hypertension, and congenital heart disease, compared to White individuals. For example, a [study](#) from McGill University found that 8.9% of Black women gave birth to preterm babies between 2004 and 2006, compared to 5.9% of White women. This data stresses the need for targeted interventions and support to address disparities.

Even with a universal healthcare system, Black women face health disparities due to systemic anti-Black racism and social inequalities. A 2023 [study](#) revealed that many Black women in Toronto feel dismissed, ignored, and neglected by healthcare providers. To improve Black maternal health, the healthcare system and other frontline providers must train service providers on anti-Black racism, specific to caring of Black childbearing women, and increase the number of Black service providers in perinatal settings.

This commitment is in line with the City of Toronto's broader work to deepen cultural and systemic change and deliver better outcomes for Black Torontonians, such as the development of a renewed [10-year Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism](#). With this proclamation, we commit to collaborating and advocating with partners for improvements to Black maternal health equity. The City of Toronto also commits to providing equitable and welcoming spaces for Black parents and families in Toronto through existing City programs and services including raising awareness on this important issue.

This motion is urgent because the organizers are looking to prepare and plan this event during the summer while council is recessed. They need confirmation that the date is approved so that they can move forward with their planning. Adequate lead time is necessary as resources will need to be allocated and arrangements made.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM20.32

(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-247880.pdf>)