

Maternal and Infant Mortality 2025 Workgroup Report

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CD(DONA)**

June 15th, 2026



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wake.gov

Maternal and Infant Mortality in Wake County

Background

- **In Wake County:**

- Black infants in Wake County are **twice as likely** to die in their first year compared to babies of other races.
- Black or African American infants in Wake County experience **higher rates** of preterm birth, low birthweight, and infant mortality compared to other groups.
- Black women in Wake County face the **highest rates** of severe pregnancy complications (139.5 per 10,000 delivery discharges).

Overview of the MIMW

- Co-Leads: **Commissioner Shinica Thomas** and **Dauline Singletary**
- Facilitator: Lindsey Yates, UNC
- The workgroup convened for over 10 months. Members consisted of local leaders with diverse partners including people with lived experience, health department staff, public health providers, researchers, community advocates, etc.
- **Goal:** To identify evidence-based recommendations to improve maternal and infant health broadly and to lessen the disparities faced by birthing people in Wake County

Workgroup Purpose

- **Address** maternal and infant health disparities in Wake County
- **Assess** and coordinate existing and new county efforts
- **Identify** evidence-based strategies and recommendations to reduce inequities
- **Examine** root causes and structural factor driving racial disparities in maternal and infant outcomes

What health outcomes are we focusing on?

- **Maternal Mortality**

- *In North Carolina, from 2019-2023 Black women were 2-3 times as likely to die while pregnant or within 6 weeks after their pregnancy ended compared to White women*

- **Infant Mortality**

- *In Wake County, from 2019-2023 the rate of infants dying in their first year of life was 5.2 deaths per 1,000 livebirths.*
- *The infant mortality rate for infants born to Black birthing people is twice as high as the county rate.*

- **Severe Maternal Morbidity**

- *In Wake County, from 2020-2024 the rate of near misses for maternal death, known as severe maternal morbidity, have been on the rise.*
- *Black birthing people had the highest incidents of near misses, with 139.5 near misses per 10,000 deliveries.*

The Maternal and Infant Mortality Workgroup includes representation from the following organizations:



WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Shinica Thomas, Workgroup Co-Chair

Commissioner - District 6, Wake County Board of Commissioners

Dauline Singletary, MPH, CD (DONA), Workgroup Co-Chair

Maternal & Child Health Section Manager, Wake County Public Health

Cheryl Stallings, PhD

Commissioner - District 3, Wake County Board of Commissioners and Health and Human Services Committee Chairperson

Safiyah Jackson

Commissioner - District 2, Wake County Board of Commissioners

Helen Brewer, BSN, RNC MNN, CLC, CCM

Maternal and Child Health Unit Manager, Wake County Public Health

DaQuanta Copeland

Community Engagement Coordinator, Wake County Housing Affordability & Community Revitalization

Lillian Davis

Director of Public Policy, NAMI

Kenyatta Elliott, MBA, MHA

Associate Vice President, Duke Health

Stefanie Etienne, MD

Medical Director of Utilization Management, WellCare of North Carolina

Denise Foreman

Behavioral Health Director, Wake County Behavioral Health

Zarina Gilchrist-Brown, MSHSA

Administrative and Community Health Worker Supervisor, Wake County Social Services

Laura Harris, BSW, MSA/PA, CHRA, CCM

Maternal and Child Health Unit Manager, Wake County Public Health

Kevin Harrell, MPH, CHES

Preventive Health Director, Wake County Public Health

Gayle E. Headen

Executive Director, Wake County Smart Start

Gregory J. Jones, BS, MS

Family Partner/Kinship Caregiver/Lived Experience Parent & Grandfather, NC Child Welfare Family Advisory Committee (CWFAC)

Rebecca Kaufman, MS

Director of Public Health, Wake County Public Health

Samiydah Kearney, BS

Parent and Community Member

Tiffany Lawrence

Maternal and Child Health Project Coordinator, Wake County Public Health

Dashe Lawton, MSN, RN, CPHN

Nurse Supervisor, Nurse Family Partnership Wake County Public Health

Daniel Lipparelli, MBA

Chief Executive Officer, NeighborHealth Center

Deidre McCullers

Community Member

Morgan Poole, MPH

Epidemiology Program Manager, Wake County Public Health

Danielle Stipes, MSW

Business Analyst, Wake County Public Libraries

Lechelle Wardell, MPH

Population Health Director, Wake County Public Health

Brandon Wiggins

Founder/Executive Director, Angel Prints Corporation

Toshina Wiggins

Founder, Angel Prints Corporation

Brooke Worthey

Project Administrator, Wake County Public Health

SPECIAL THANKS

Lindsey Yates, PhD, MPH

Associate Professor, Dept of Maternal Child Health and Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Whitney Arey, PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow, Maternal and Child Health, UNC-Chapel Hill

Adamari Calixto- Benitez, MPH

Maternal and Child Health Intern, Wake County Public Health

Hanna Erhardt

Practicum Student/Intern, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Kaila Hardin

Wake County Resident with Lived Experience

Jennifer Nancy Morin Tamez

Wake County Resident with Lived Experience

Jordi Wright

Lived Experience

Workgroup Meeting Summaries

1st

- Built understanding of maternal and child health issues

2nd

- Discussed current interventions and gaps

3rd

- Conducted root causes analysis for improvements

4th

- Reviewed survey responses and set group priorities

Workgroup Meeting Summaries

5th

- Determined the need for a community survey to guide recommendations

6th

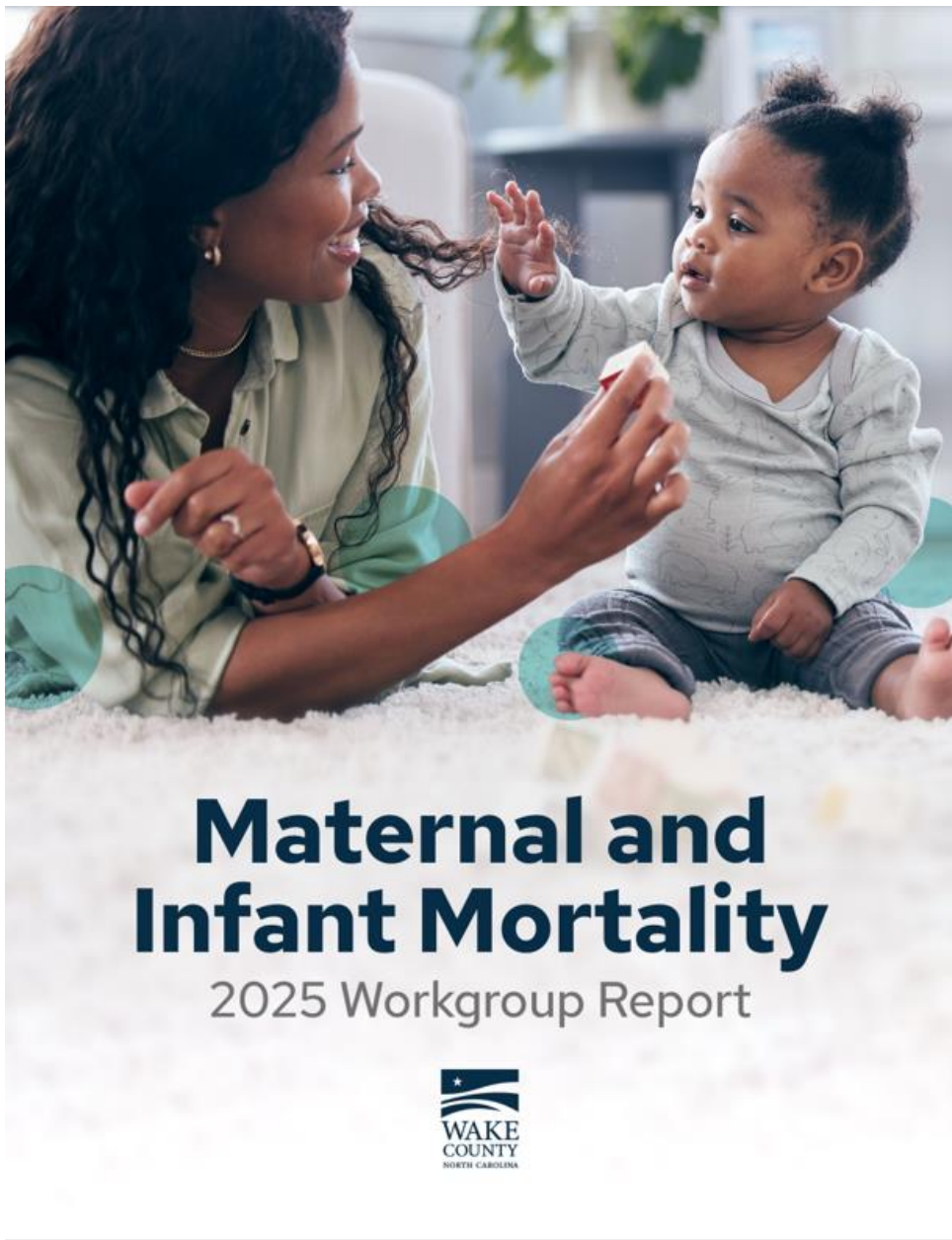
- Identified 4 priority intervention areas

7th

- Refined recommendations, focus areas, and supporting resources

8th

- Reviewed partner alignment and implementation strategies, including town hall planning



MIMW Report

- Published in January 2026,
- Shares lived experiences from Wake County Residents
- Highlights four Key focus areas,
- Outlines a three-year plan to reduce inequities & guide implementation efforts.
- Recaps Maternal & Child Health Toolkit & Resource Map
 - [MIMW 2025 Report](#)

Report Focus Areas



1

Focus Area 1: Quality Perinatal Health Services.

2

Focus Area 2: Women's Health Promotion & Education

3

Focus Area 3: Community Engagement & Wrap-Around Care

4

Focus Area 4: Early Childhood Education, Development & Care

Focus Area 1: Quality Perinatal Health Services

- **Improve access** to high quality, patient-patient centered perinatal and postpartum care
- **Train providers** and deliver trauma-informed care
- **Reduce disparities** and infant health disparities



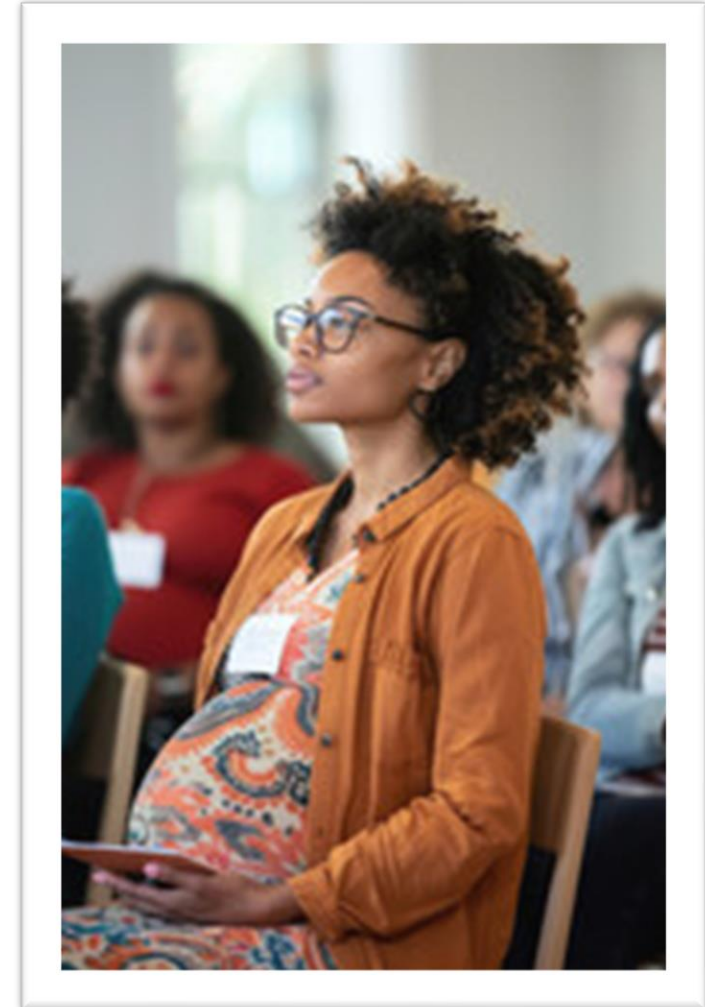
Focus Area 2: Women's Health Promotion and Education

- **Increase education** on women's health
- **Build partnerships** and community awareness
- **Improve access** to support and resources



Focus Area 3: Community Engagement, Continuity of Care and Wrap-Around Care

- **Strengthen** care coordination
- **Expand** community-based doulas, home-visiting, transportation, and support networks
- **Ensure** continuous, comprehensive care for birthing people and families



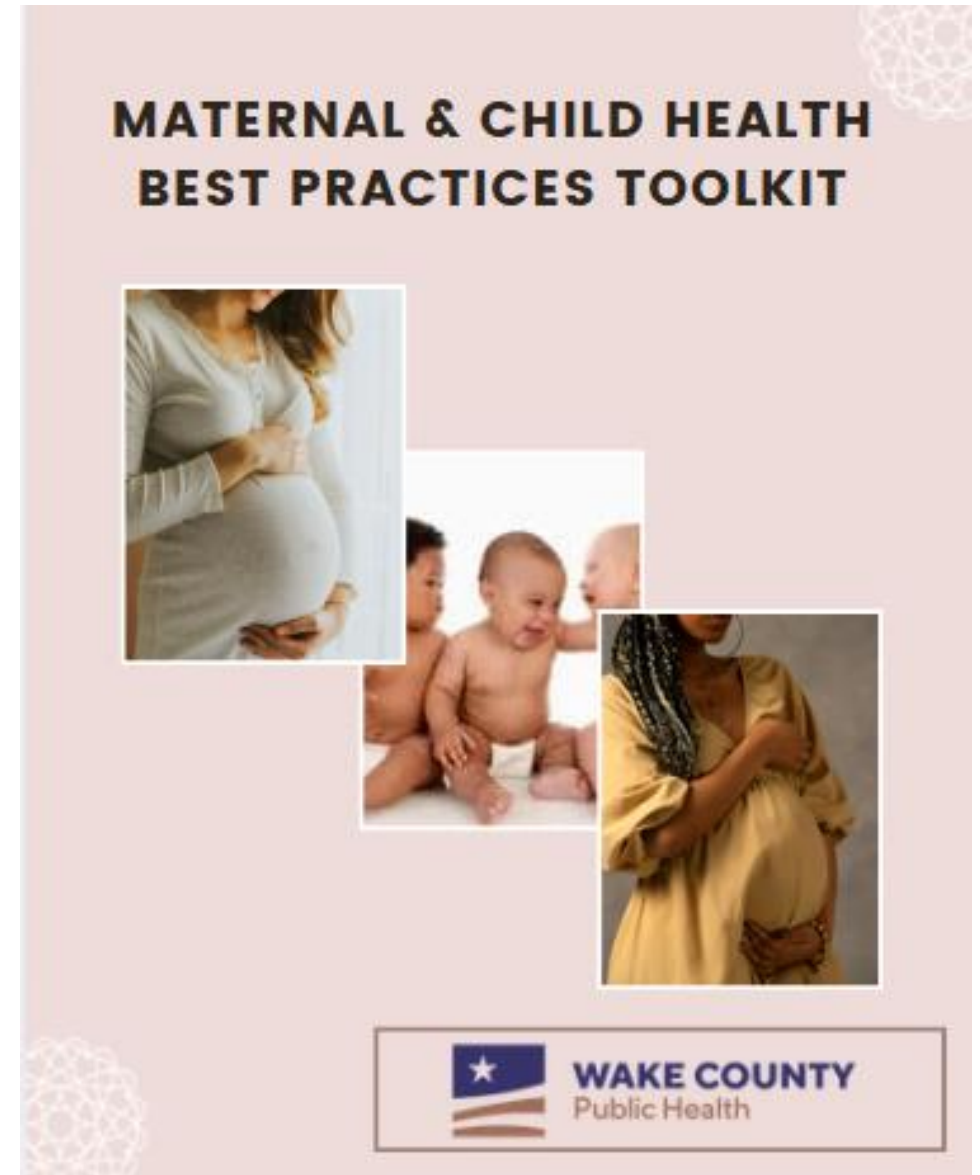
Focus Area 4: Early Childhood Education, Development, and Care

- **Expand** access to affordable, high-quality childcare and early education
- **Support** families and childcare workers
- **Help** children build skills for kindergarten and future success



MCH Toolkit

- Guides maternal and child health efforts
- Provides tools for prenatal and postnatal care
- Improves health outcomes through collaboration and advocacy.
- [MCH Toolkit](#)



Community Maternal and Child Health Resources

- Lists maternal and child health resources in Wake County.
- 9,000 + views
- [MCH Community Resources Google My Maps](#)



Workgroup Sustainability Plan

Workgroup Check-ins

- Reconvene in 6 months (July 2026)
- Meet once a year (span of 3 years)
- Report out progress

Apricot 360

- Partnership and Relationship tracking tool

Townhalls

- Hosted within each region (North, South, East, West)

Key Community Partner Highlights



- Hosted Ask the Doc sessions in English and Spanish
- Supported community outreach and engagement
- Collaborated on progress tracking and reporting



- Reoccurring panelist support from MD
- Provides support on managed care plan updates & engagement
- Raleigh Welcome Room
Allow access for community outreach



- Reoccurring panelist support from MD
- Met w/ OB/GYN team to create COC
- Partnering w/ Centering Program to offer Doula & Postpartum Parenting support to families



- Outreach Space
- Hosting August ATD & Immunization event

Townhall Meetings & Promotion

- March 17th – Spanish
 - Cary
- March 21st – English
 - Angel Prints Community Baby Shower
- April 13th – English & Spanish
 - WakeTech CHW students
- April 25th – English & Spanish
 - SER YMCA
- May 7th – English
 - Tarboro Community Center
- May 29th – English
 - UNC Rex- Perinatal Region IV Nuse Leaders

Community Impact

- **Total:** 661
- **Ex:** Ask the Doc Sessions, Perinatal Region IV Nurse Leaders, Angel Prints, Wake Tech CHW, Wake County Public Libraries.....

Region	People reached
North & Central	227
South- Pending scheduling	0
East	358
West	76

Community Conversations

A Wake County Town Hall Meeting

Maternal & Infant Health

Join us for a community town hall on maternal and infant health! We'll share quick updates on local trends, hear insights from health professionals, and open the floor for conversation. Families, community partners, and providers are all welcome. Your voice matters.

July 16 | Thursday 6 p.m.

 **The Forks Cafeteria & Catering**
(339 Brooks St. Wake Forest NC, 27587)



Dinner Will Be Provided For Attendees

RSVP Today! 



Conversaciones comunitarias

Una asamblea pública del condado de Wake

Salud materno-infantil

¡Acompáñenos en una asamblea comunitaria sobre salud materna e infantil! Compartiremos breves actualizaciones sobre las tendencias locales, escucharemos las perspectivas de profesionales de la salud y abriremos el espacio para el diálogo. Las familias, los socios comunitarios y los proveedores son todos bienvenidos. Su voz importa.

Julio 16 | Jueves 6 p.m.

 **The Forks Cafeteria & Catering**
(339 Brooks St. Wake Forest NC, 27587)



Quienes participen recibirán cena gratis

¡Regístrate Hoy! 



PANELIST

Dr. Stefanie Etienne



Carolina Complete Health
Family Physician and Medical Director, Utilization Management

Ste'Keira Sheppardson



Founder/ CEO
Triangle Doulas of Color

Diana Brown Diaz



Maternal & Children's Health -
Public Health Educator,
Childbirth and Safe Sleep Educator, Doula



Rotary Club of Wake Forest 

Wake.Gov/MCH
Questions? Contact:
Tiffany.Lawrence@wake.gov for details.

PANELISTAS

Dra. Stefanie Etienne



Carolina Complete Health
Médico de familia y Director médico de Gestión de la utilización

Ste'Keira Sheppardson



Fundador / CEO
Triangle Doulas of Color

Diana Brown Diaz



Salud Materna e Infantil -
Eduador en Salud Pública,
Eduador en Parto y Sueño Seguro, Doula



Rotary Club of Wake Forest 

Wake.Gov/MCH
¿Preguntas? Envíe un correo electrónico a:
Tiffany.Lawrence@wake.gov.

Next Steps

- **Meeting with different community partners**
- **Promoting report at Wake County Public Libraries**
- **Establishing collaboration with Carolina Complete**
- **Providing TA support to partners to assist with connectivity and data tracking**



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For More Information
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