



NPQIC Cohosts Meet and Greet for Black Doula Support Program

The Nebraska Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (NPQIC) hosted a meet-and-greet event for the Rooted Doula Care and Support Program, a pilot program that will connect 30 Black pregnant people with the support of full spectrum doulas at no cost. Other program partners include I Be Black Girl, Nebraska Medicine, the Nebraska Black Doula Collective and United Healthcare.

The meet and greet provided partners of the program with an opportunity to meet one another and form meaningful connections. The doulas interested in participating met with the Nebraska Medicine nurses and providers, as they will all be a part of the care team of the Black pregnant patients. At one table, doula Delicia McGhee talked about the unique value of doulas in Black birth journeys with Jeff Stafford, chief executive officer of Nebraska Medicaid for United Healthcare. McGhee explained that births in the Black community conventionally involve family or extended family providing support for the pregnant person. "The role of the doula continues this tradition in a more formalized way," she said. "For a Black expecting person, I provide a crucial role of being someone who looks like her, with an understanding of her priorities and needs, that advocates for her and her birth plan."

Stafford stated that United Healthcare is invested in the Rooted Doula Care and Support Program because its leadership believes the best way to ensure the long-term health of the mother and the child is to start early. "We see the data that shows having a doula involved in the birth process results in fewer instances of lower birth weight, caesarian deliveries and birth complications," he explained. "Doulas statistically contribute to better births for the mother and the child, and that's obviously something we want to support."

Ashlei Spivey, executive director of I Be Black Girl, expressed that the Rooted Doula Care and Support Program is crucial to counteracting a health system in Nebraska that does not serve Black people well. "This program allows Black pregnant people to participate in creating their own care teams by adding an advocate in the room," she said.

Sydney Carraher, DNP, program administrator, NPQIC, stated that the partnerships formed in creating the Rooted Doula Care and Support Program will be invaluable going forward to address additional perinatal concerns in the Black community. "We hope this pilot program is just step one towards making a systemic impact on Black maternal and infant health outcomes in Nebraska," Dr. Carraher said.