



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 13, 2021

## **Black Maternal Health Week is a time to reflect on how we can do better**

### **Joint statement from Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis and Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd**

Black women in America die from complications related to pregnancy at roughly two to three times the rate of white, Hispanic, Asian American, and Pacific Islander women. We see this crisis as being far too prevalent in our communities of color in Milwaukee, and we also see the sad truth that this high maternal mortality rate for Black women has persisted because of inequity and bias that ultimately leads to major disparities in health access, health insurance and – most of all – health outcomes.

We believe the 4<sup>th</sup> annual national Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW – April 11 to April 17), founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, offers a prime opportunity to discuss, inform and search for solutions to addressing the crisis of Black maternal mortality and morbidity in Milwaukee and across our nation.

The Alliance recognizes the need for greater resources, equity and respect in Black maternal health and we also agree with their key goals during BMHW:

- Deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the US
- Amplify community-driven policy, research, and care solutions
- Center the voices of Black Mamas, women, families, and stakeholders
- Provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth and reproductive justice
- Enhance community organizing on Black maternal health

To see how we can better ensure that Black women (and all women) have equitable access to health care before, during, and after pregnancy, **we are introducing legislation** that will require the Office of Equity and Inclusion to work with the Milwaukee Health Department to examine the department's current projects, programs and initiatives related to Black maternal health to see where and how changes can be made to help close maternal health disparity gaps. We want our daughters, nieces and granddaughters to have better maternal health outcomes and overall better quality care, and we also want our health systems to be more equitable and holistic.

We believe the future for Black mothers will be better if we work together to push back against and eliminate inequities and barriers to better maternal health.