



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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APRIL 26, 2023

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### Statements on Disrupted Virtual Session on Black Maternal Health Findings

FREDERICK, Md. – Yesterday, the Frederick County Health Department attempted to host a virtual session on their findings on Black Maternal Health Disparity. Their virtual session was disrupted by racist and obscene behavior, including verbal death threats, which led to the cancellation of the event.

Racism was [declared a public health crisis in Frederick County in 2021](#). “Last night showed that our community continues to be subjected to racism. A just society ensures that no person - regardless of the color of their skin - is exposed again and again to things we know are harmful,” said **Dr. Barbara Brookmyer**, Health Officer for Frederick County Maryland, Board Certified Family Physician. “To fulfil the ideal of justice for all, we have an obligation to tackle unhealthy conditions and barriers to optimal health and wellness for everyone.”

“In order to drive more positive Black maternal health outcomes, we must acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis,” said **Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater**. “The findings in the Frederick County Black Maternal Health Disparity Study characterize Black maternal health disparities in terms of specific outcomes, like the conceptual framework to get to the root cause of these disparities. I am disgusted that someone would disrupt a session revealing these findings and next steps on how the County can do better. I look forward to working with the health department, our Office of Equity and Inclusion, community organizations, and emerging change agents to create positive outcomes for Black mothers in our community.”

“The disruption to yesterday’s meeting Black Maternal Health Disparities Report was yet another terrible reminder of the massive work we have before us; to create a more equitable community for all, said **Michael Hughes**, Frederick County Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer. “The lack of understanding of the need to focus on the greatest disparities in order to uplift everyone as a whole is why education on these matters is so greatly needed. The Office of Equity and Inclusion is committed to prioritizing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as the right thing to do.”

Remaining undeterred and acknowledging the critical opportunity presented to address health inequities in Frederick County, specifically with Black maternal health, the health department will be rescheduling the session for a later date.

“Last night’s experience was hurtful. It confirms for us why we need to be explicit calling out racism as the issue here. It’s not the race of the Black moms that’s an issue; it’s the structure and culture that continues to cause trauma and damage,” said **Danielle Haskins**, Director of the Frederick County Health Department’s Equity Office. “Our community has given us clear support and momentum to focus our attention on Black maternal health disparities. We are united in our shared responsibility to continue to move forward towards transformation and justice.”

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