A Community Partnership to Support Childbearing Families

Who: HealthPartners and Everyday Miracles
Where: Minneapolis, MN
What: A healthcare system partnered with a community-based maternal health organization to expand access to culturally centered doula services

WHY: Even though Minnesota was one of the earliest states to cover doula services through Medicaid, disparities persist for birthing families of color, who experience higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

Ensuring that birthing parents of color feel seen and heard during one of the most important moments in their lives is a critical first step to improve maternal health outcomes for all. Doulas who are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC) often bring a unique understanding of how a patient's cultural context and lived experiences may affect their health needs, communication patterns and beliefs, and therefore help mitigate health inequities.

GOAL: HealthPartners and Everyday Miracles sought to recruit, train, and help to certify more BIPOC doulas to better serve birthing families.

HOW: HealthPartners – a 65-year-old healthcare system owned by its members – has strategically located its hospitals in neighborhoods with the greatest need for healthcare access across Minnesota and Western Wisconsin, while also providing affordable health insurance.

Founded in 2003, Everyday Miracles provides a broad range of services to birthing families, including evidence-based education and wellness classes, compassionate and culturally informed support, and a nonjudgmental, caring community. Everyday Miracles clients have lower cesarean rates, higher breastfeeding initiation rates, and higher breastfeeding rates at six months postpartum than the national average.

RESULTS: In just two years, Everyday Miracles increased their number of certified BIPOC doulas from 40 percent of their roster at the start of 2020 to 70 percent in 2022.

The Takeaway

Intentional partnerships with community-based organizations must be based on a clear recognition of the needs of both partners – including the resources required. HealthPartners and Everyday Miracles demonstrate that healthcare providers, payers, and other organizations that want to effectively address maternal healthcare equity can do so by collaborating with local organizations and leaders who are closer to the needs and solutions required for all birthing people.