

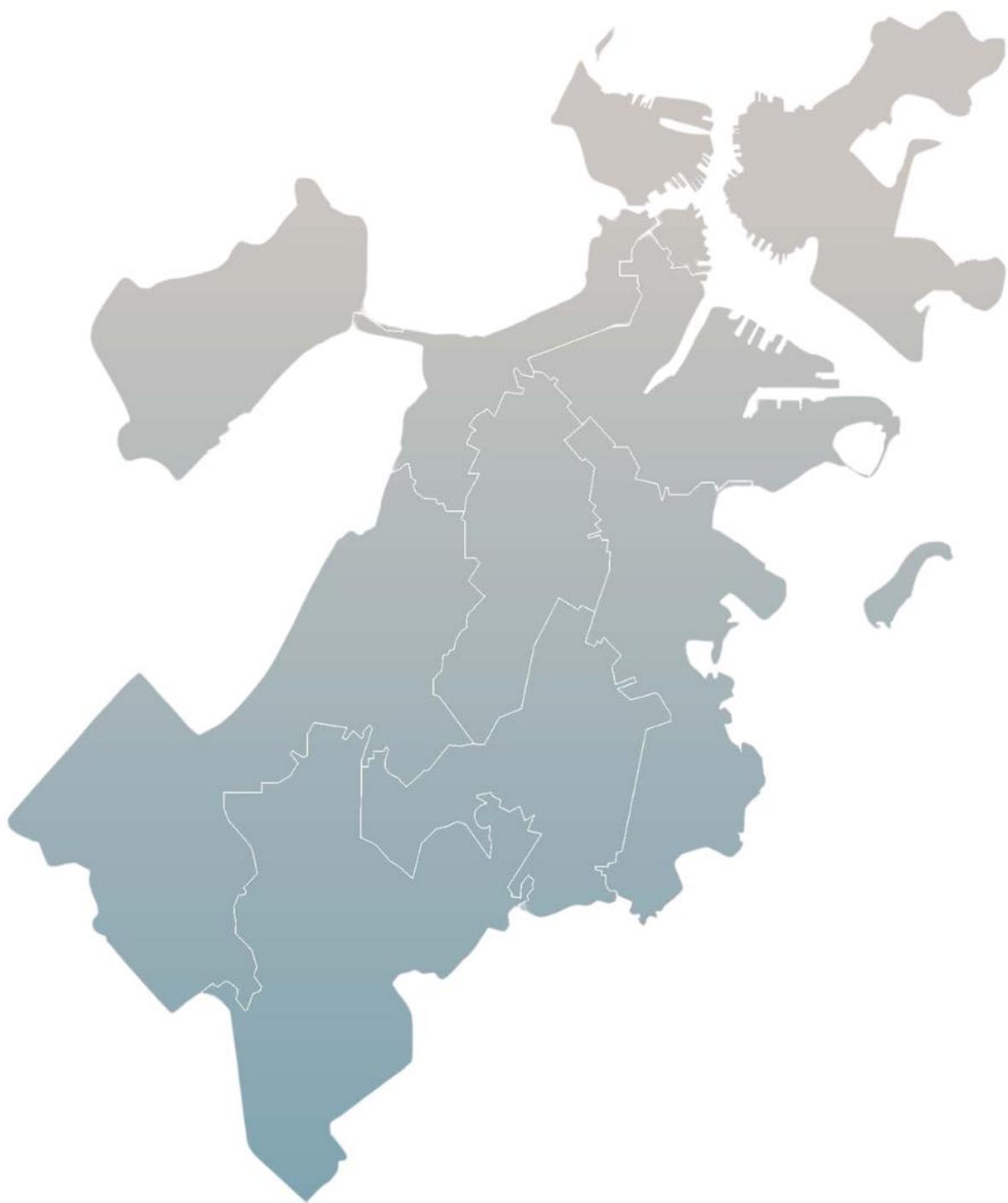
# Boston Board of Health

September 10, 2025

## AGENDA

1. Chairperson's Remarks
2. Executive Office Report
3. Acceptance and Approval of Minutes
4. Spotlight: Maternal and Early Childhood Health Initiatives
5. Adjourn





# Executive Office Report

*September 10, 2025*



# Executive Office Report

## Mass and Cass Updates

- Working in close collaboration with City of Boston agencies including Coordinated Response Team, Boston Police, and Public Works
- Our shared goal is to end outdoor substance use, improve public safety and quality of life
- BPHC's focus is on facilitating access to treatment and needed services. Ongoing work includes:
  - Expanded treatment access
  - Transportation and family reunification
  - Updated needle distribution practices
  - Funding Newmarket BID cleanliness efforts
  - Decentralizing services
  - Provider engagement
  - Engagement with community and recovery campus planning efforts



# Executive Office Report

What to know about  
**MEASLES** 

The best way to keep yourself and your family healthy is to make sure you are **fully vaccinated against measles**.

-  Vitamins do **not** prevent measles.
-  Too much vitamin A can cause liver injury, coma, and other complications.
-  Two doses of the MMR vaccine are about **97% effective** against measles.
-  Always talk with your or your child's healthcare provider before making dietary and supplement changes.

 Learn more at [boston.gov/measles](https://boston.gov/measles).  
Posted March 17, 2025.

Boston residents should feel confident that *Massachusetts is taking steps to protect their access to vaccines.*

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued guidance that *protects vaccine access.*

At Boston Public Health Commission, we are committed to keeping our neighbors safe and healthy, especially in the face of short-sighted and dangerous federal policy changes.

In Boston, evidence-based science will *always* guide our work to protect our residents and communities.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2025



# Executive Office Report



**Boston Public Health Commission**

16,426 followers

5d • 🌐

We joined neighbors and community partners on Boston Common to plant 22,000 purple flags in honor and memory of the 22,000 people we've lost to overdose in Massachusetts over the last decade.

Despite a 38% decline in overdose deaths in 2024, the lowest number of overdoses in nearly a decade, there is more work to do. One life lost to overdose is one too many.

#IOAD2025 #EndOverdose #Boston



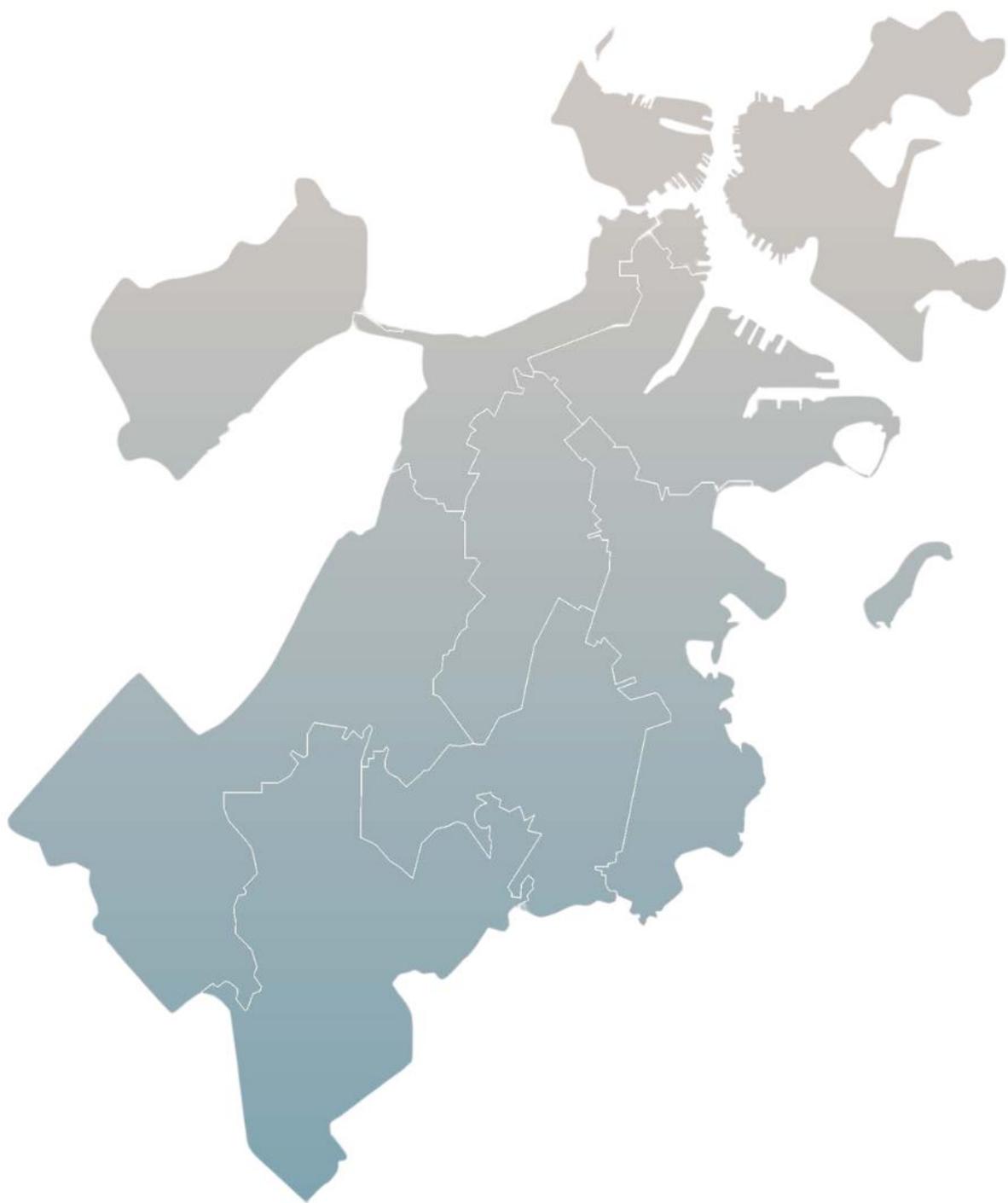
LOCAL NEWS

August 6th, 2025

## City's Live Long and Well Agenda awards \$5M in grants with goal of closing health equity gaps

Avery Bleichfeld

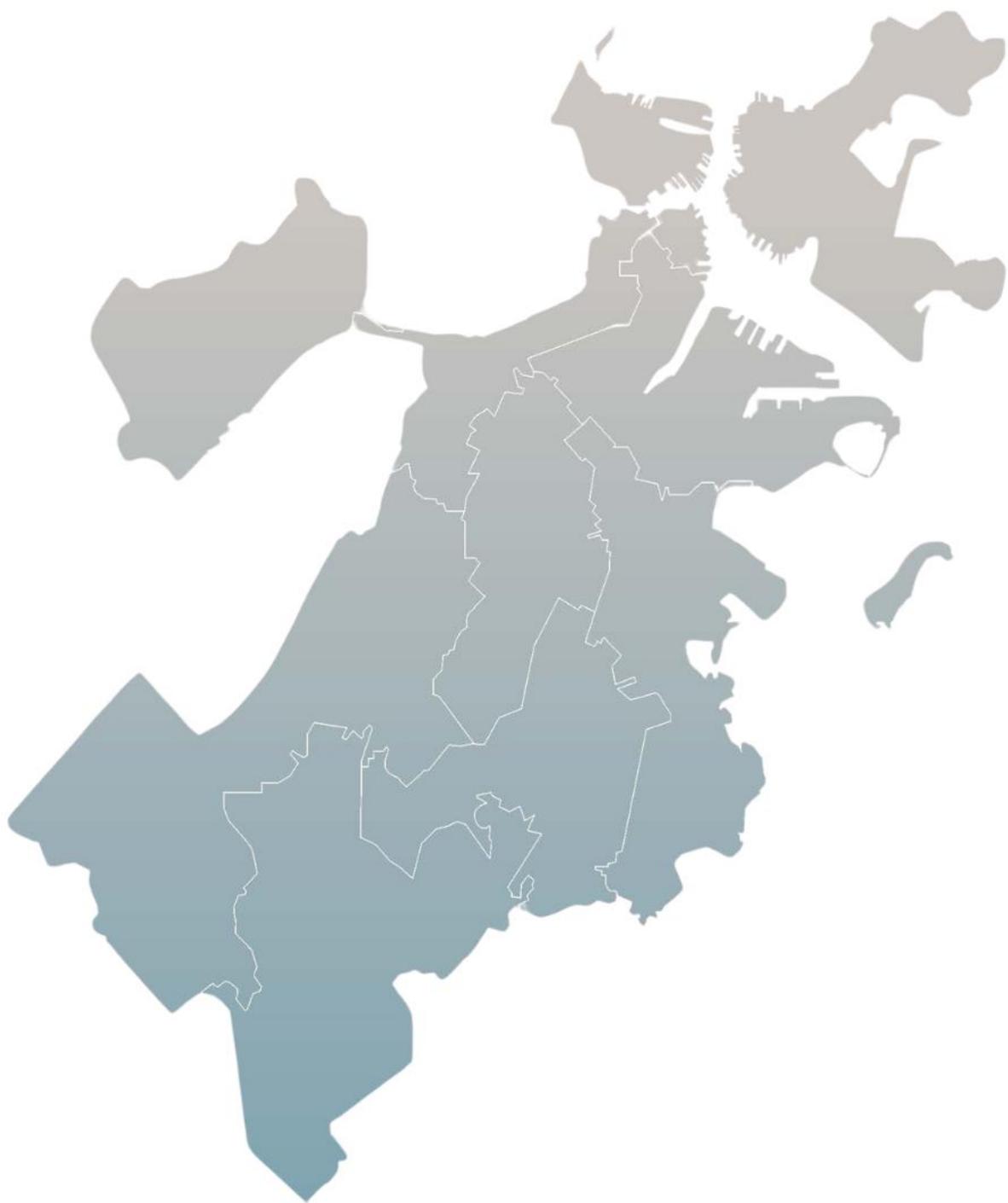




# Executive Office Report

*September 10, 2025*

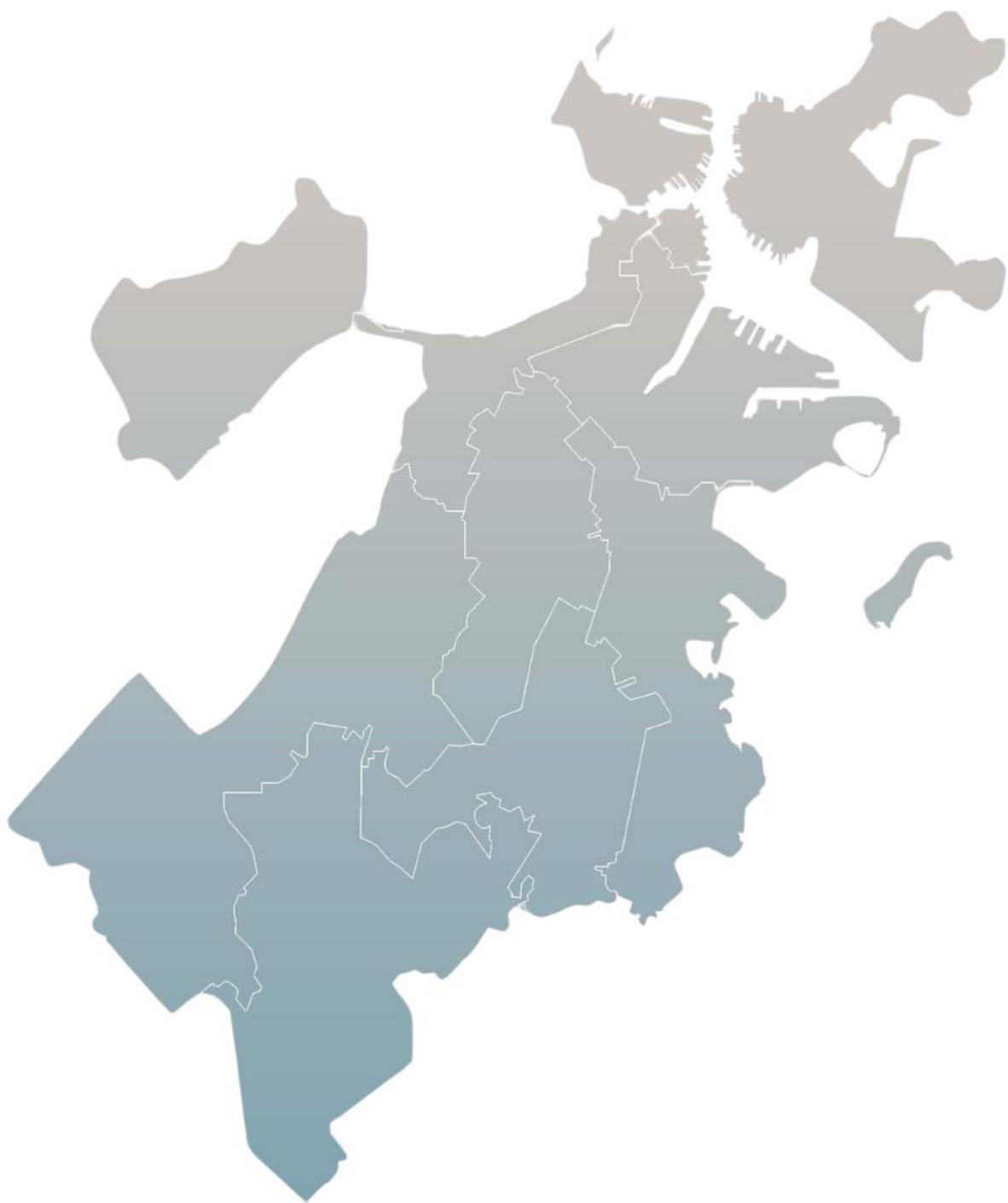




# Approval of Minutes

*By roll call vote*





# Spotlight: Maternal and Early Childhood Health Initiatives



# The Child, Adolescent, and Family Health Bureau

1. Strengthens, empowers and promotes the health and well-being of children, adolescents, families and communities
2. Provides and connects residents to services, builds the capacity of communities and organizations, and promotes healthy development and choices
3. Uses a holistic and strengths-based approach to advance health equity across the lifespan



Maternal  
and Early  
Childhood  
Health



Child and  
Adolescent  
Health

# Maternal and Early Childhood Health



# MCH Programs At BPHC

- **Boston Healthy Start Initiative (BHSI):** Provides education, advocacy, and care coordination to Black-identified pregnant individuals and families. Also coordinates the **Community Action Network (CAN)**, which focuses on community organizing around family and child health issues.
- **Boston Community Perinatal Health Initiative (COPHI) Doula Project:** Connects families to doula support, trains community members as doulas, and educates providers and residents about doula services.
- **Early Childhood Mental Health:** Supports families and providers in promoting mental wellness among young children, particularly those at risk for behavioral health disorders.
- **Father Friendly:** A home visiting program that focuses on increasing father engagement and support in parenting and child development.
- **Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR):** Reviews fetal and infant deaths annually and uses the findings to inform policies and programs that advance maternal and child health equity.
- **Food Pantry:** Provides food assistance to low-income and parenting residents of Boston.
- **Healthy Baby Healthy Child (HBHC):** Offers home visiting, nursing, and advocacy services for pregnant and parenting families with children up to five years of age.
- **Healthy Start in Housing:** Provides home visiting services and subsidized housing (in partnership with the Boston Housing Authority) to housing-insecure pregnant and parenting families
- **Welcome Family:** Delivers home visiting services to new parents during the first eight weeks postpartum.



# **Boston Community Perinatal Health Initiative (COPHI) Doula Project**

# Boston COPHI Program Team



Brandy Watts  
Director



Tonya Pittman  
Program Coordinator II



Neika Christalin  
Training Manager



Charise Simmons  
Public Health Advocate II

# Problem Statement

- Black families continue to face significant disparities in maternal and infant health.
- Black women are at least **three times more likely** than White women to die from pregnancy-related causes (CDC).<sup>1</sup>
- In 2021, the maternal mortality rate for Black women was 69.9 per 100,000 live births—nearly **triple** that of White women.<sup>2</sup>
- Each year, 50,000 women in the U.S. suffer from pregnancy complications, with Black women disproportionately affected.
- Black infants are more likely to die and to be born prematurely, increasing their risk of long-term health problems.<sup>3</sup>

1. CDC - Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/disparities-pregnancy-related-deaths/index.html>

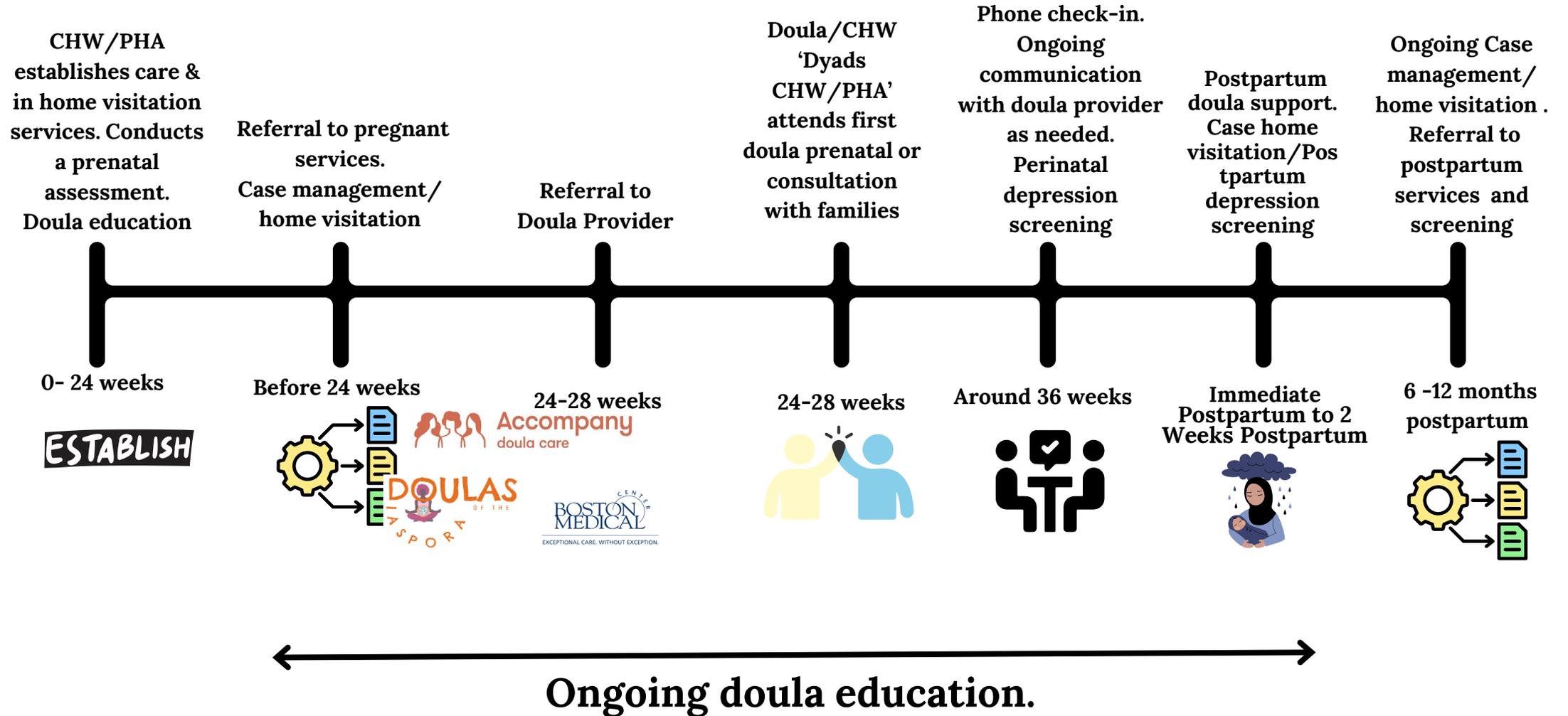
2. CDC - Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2021 URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm>

3. March of Dimes - Premature Birth Report Cards URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/severematernalmorbidity.html>

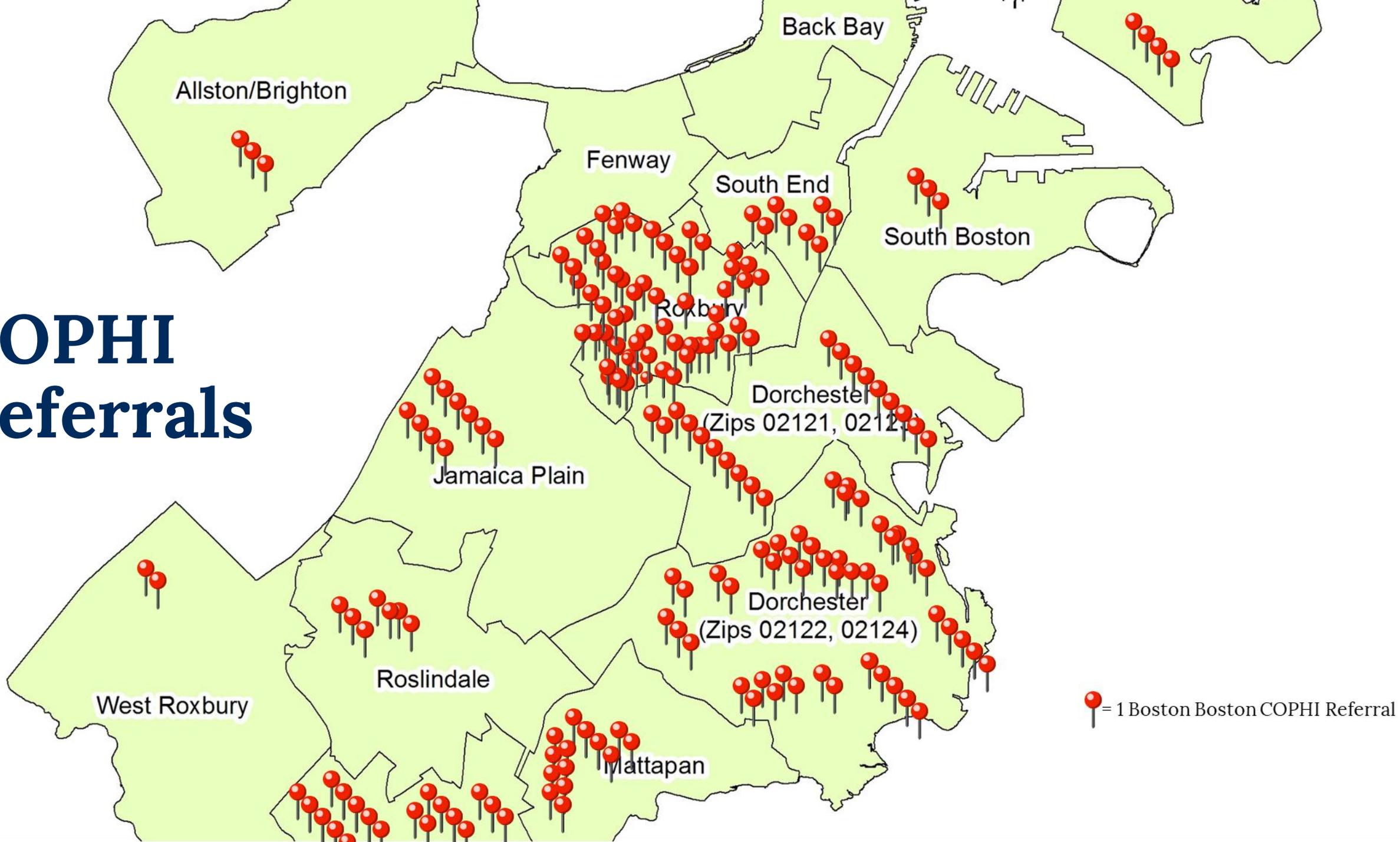
# Strategies to Improving the Birthing Process for Marginalized Communities

- **Connect families to birthing support** through teams of trained doulas and CHWs, addressing social determinants and advocating for equitable, respectful care.
- **Increase and improve the doula workforce** by being more open and respectful toward other cultures via the Doula Workforce Development Center, offering certification and training to community members, doulas, and CHWs.
- **Educate providers and community stakeholders** on doula benefits through a birth equity campaign and academic detailing for those serving perinatal families.

# Boston COPHI Care Schedule



# COPHI Referrals



## Meet Your Doula

Pinned

### Virtual Handbook for Clients



PDF

for+clients-2

## Meet Taija Reveredes



I have been a Birth Doula for: **3 years**

I speak **English**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because of my passion for women's health and wellness.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is being a part of people in my community's journey to parenthood. Being someone people can come to for help, guidance, and support is my life's purpose.

#### Additional services

- Aromatherapy
- Infant massage education

## Hablamos Español / We Speak Spanish

Pinned

### Virtual Handbook for Clients



PDF

Manual+virtual+para+clientes+%283%29

Una **doula** es una persona dedicada al apoyo de los padres que dan a luz durante el embarazo, el nacimiento, y el periodo posparto. Obtenga más información sobre lo que ofrece una doula, los beneficios del apoyo de una doula y las preguntas frecuentes.

## Meet Sharon Watkins



I have been a Birth Doula for **2 years**

I speak **English and Spanish**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because. I was bullied, disrespected, and disregarded at the second birth of my child and I didn't know my rights.

Yo me convertí en una doula

## Hablamos Español / We Speak Spanish

### Meet Laura Pichardo



I have been a Birth Doula for **3 years**

I speak **English and Spanish**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a Doula because birthing families should have a beautiful, safe, just birth experience from the beginning of their pregnancy, labor, and delivery, supporting them through postpartum

Elegí ser Doula porque las familias parturientas se merecen una experiencia hermosa, segura, saludable y justa desde el inicio de su embarazo, su labor y parto, apoyándolos durante el puerperio.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is living through the families a trauma-free experience and the gratefulness of a proud accomplished woman.

Una de las partes mas gratificante del trabajo de Doula es vivir con las familias una experiencia sin traumas y el aprecio de una mujer orgullosa de sus logros.

## Nou pale Kreyol Ayisyen /We Speak Haitian Creole

Pinned

### Virtual Handbook for Clients



PDF

Manye%CC%80+vitye%CC%80+pou+kliyan+%282%29

Yon **doula** se yon moun ki dedye a sipòte paran akouchman pandan gwosès, nesans, ak peryòd apre akouchman an. Aprann plis de sa sevis yon doula bay, benefis ki vini ak sipò yon doula, ak kesyon yo poze souvan.

## Meet Jayne



I have been a Birth Doula for **10 years**

I speak **English and Haitian Creole**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because the universe compelled my heart to step up and step in

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is Knowing I was

## We are Bilingual

### Meet Vanessa Prohodski



I have been a Birth Doula for **8 years**

I speak **English and Portuguese**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because I believe every birthing person deserves to feel supported, cared for, seen, and heard during the perinatal period.

Porque eu acredito que todas as parturientes merecem sentir-se cuidadas, apoiadas, vistas e escutadas durante a fase de gestação e parto

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is witnessing the transformative process of giving birth.

Ver as pessoas passando por esse processo tão transformador que é o parto.

#### Additional services

- Aromatherapy Childbirth education services
- Photography - Birth

## We are Bilingual

### Meet Poema Dauti



I have been a Birth Doula for **15 years**

I speak **English and Albanian**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because It's my call

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is Being present when babies are born

#### Additional services

- Childbirth education services
- Infant massage education
- Meal prep/nutrition counseling
- Newborn care specialist
- Sleep support consulting
- First Aid and CPR
- Postpartum doula

## Meet Myriam Lukoff



## Meet Your Doula

### Meet Shantel Collins



I have been a Birth Doula for **3 years**

I speak **English**

I serve **all of Boston**

I became a birth doula because I should have been a statistic with my first birth. I wasn't, in part, because I had a wonderful birth doula.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is when they say "I can't believe I DID IT" after birthing their baby.

## Hannah DeMoss



I have been a Birth Doula for **4 years 6 months**

I speak **English**

## Meet Your Doula of the Diaspora

The Boston COPHI Program's DOULA Repository will help clients choose a doula. This project will serve as a space where Boston Doulas can share experiences, stories, and services to highlight and share the benefits of doula services.

### Meet Your Doula

#### Meet Khali Tabor



I have been a Birth Doula for 2 months

I speak English

I became a birth doula because I am passionate about helping women in the Black and Brown community create a personalized plan to deliver healthy babies and support them through the transition into motherhood.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is witnessing the strength and joy of women as they bring new life into the world.

Additional services

- Meal prep/nutrition
- Counseling
- Prenatal and Postpartum Meditation and Breathwork

♡ 1

### I speak English & Cape Verdean Creole

#### Meet Marjorie Calice



I have been a Birth Doula for 3 years and 9 months

I speak English, Cape Verdean Creole

I serve all of Boston

I became a birth doula because I wanted to be for people what I wish I had as a single teen parent

um vra un doula de nasiment pamot,

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is making people feel seen and heard

O un de kes part mas agracidt de trabojd doula ene

Additional services

- Childbirth education services
- Lactation consultant/ counselor services
- Newborn care and parenting classes
- Sibling support (for your older children at the birth)

♡ 1

Hello

♡ 0

### I Speak English & Haitian Creole

#### Meet Vanessa Clerveaux



I have been a Birth Doula for 1 year

I speak English, Haitian Creole

I became a birth doula because I come from generations of passionate medical practitioners, loving holistic healers, and a grandmother who was a doula.

This has led me to find my purpose in life, within the sacred practice of birth, allowing me to guide families in their unique journeys. My natural advocacy and being a voice stems from my 16 years of college and Olympic-level Track and Field and traveling the world serving in Humanitarian efforts. My goal will always be to affirm your natural instincts while being your cheerleader, guide, and confident advocate.

Mwe leve nan youn fanmi geriseuz ak pratikan medikal. Sa fem jwenn pasyon m pou m ede famni nan moman ansent jiska apre nesans. Pandan 16ans, mwe pratike espò, represente Ayiti nan Track & Field, epi mwen too gen opòinite pou m sèvi kominote m. Objektif mwen se pou m defann ou, remote morale ou e sipòte w nan eksperyans matènèl ou.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is finding the light in each unique birth journey. There is no one way to educate, advocate, and support a family and each life

### I speak English y Hablo Español

#### Meet Yanira Montes-Colon



I have been a Birth Doula for 3 months

I speak English, Spanish, ASL

I became a birth doula because it was a calling made by my heart and soul

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work knowing being able to positively impact and guide birth people of color in a special and sacred way

Additional services

- Aromatherapy
- Meal prep/nutrition counseling
- Parenting consulting
- Prenatal Yoga
- Sibling support (for your older children at the birth)

♡ 1

### Meet Your Doula

#### Meet Ashley Robinson



I have been a Birth Doula for 7 months

I speak English

I became a birth doula because my journey through fertility struggles opened my eyes to the need for support and education in the birthing process. After years of navigating my own challenges, I longed to create a space where others could feel empowered and understood. In preparation for my rainbow baby, I realized that I wanted to not only prepare myself but also help others through their journeys. Becoming a doula allowed me to delve deep into the complexities of pregnancy and birth, transforming my personal experiences into a source of strength and knowledge. I wanted to ensure that no one else felt alone or overwhelmed during such a vulnerable time. Being a doula means advocating for families, providing emotional support, and sharing evidence-based information to help them make informed choices.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is witnessing the power of birth and the deep connections that form during this vulnerable time. I love offering reassurance and guidance, helping parents find their strength and voice. Knowing that I play a part in supporting their journey brings so much fulfillment, reminding me why I chose this path in the first place. Every birth story is

### Meet Your Doula

#### Meet Krystal Figueroa



I have been a Birth Doula for 3 months

I speak English

I became a birth doula because I believe it's imperative for all birthing people to have access to a supportive birthing team that can encourage, guide, and support them throughout all stages of pregnancy and postpartum. I believe it is essential for all birthing people to have the tools to feel empowered every step of the way during this sacred rite of passage.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is seeing mothers/ birthing people feel like they are being heard and are empowered in their choices.

Additional services

- Aromatherapy
- Prenatal Yoga

♡ 1

### Meet Your Doula

#### Meet Dana Alas



I have been a Birth Doula for 3 months

I speak English

I became a birth doula because I believe every birthing person deserves to be heard, respected, and honored during the birth process.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is providing support for growing families.

Additional services

- Cloth diapering education

♡ 1

### Meet Your Doula

#### Meet Dynasty Harris



I have been a Birth Doula for 2 months

I speak English & Spanish

I became a birth doula because I believe every birthing person deserves to feel supported, empowered, and heard during one of the most transformative moments of their life. I am passionate about creating a calm, respectful space where families feel informed, cared for, and confident as they bring new life into the world.

Me convertí en doula de parto porque creo que cada persona gestante merece sentirse acompañada, empoderada y escuchada durante uno de los momentos más transformadores de su vida. Me apasiona crear un espacio de calma y respeto, donde las familias se sientan informadas, cuidadas y seguras al dar la bienvenida a una nueva vida.

One of the most rewarding parts of doula work is witnessing people tap into their inner strength during birth. Being able to support their emotional, physical, and spiritual journey, and to witness the birth of not just a baby, but a new identity as a parent, is an honor that continually inspires me.



Photo by Vanessa Prohodski Photographer for Accompany Doula Care/Every Mother Counts





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**ME TOO PRESIDENT?**

ME TOO PRESIDENT? is a national campaign to raise awareness of the impact of sexual violence on our country's political process. We are calling on all Americans to join us in demanding that our elected leaders take action to protect our democracy and our future.

MADE WITH  
Public Involvement  
When: October 29, 2014  
Time: 1:00PM



Free Doula Service Now Available  
**ARE YOU PREGNANT?**  
 Why? Doula is a pro cost with the CoMae program  
**WHAT IS A DOULA?**  
 A trained professional who supports and partners for the during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum for the mother and her emotional support for parents to make informed decisions  
 Doula services are provided by Advanced and Doula team and a "Doulas" program is available for pregnant women in the Eastern Shore of Maryland  
 Doula services are provided to support pregnant women and postpartum women with their doula care  
 A doula is not a nurse, midwife, or doctor  
 Questions? Email us  
 Eastern Shore Health Center 877-634-6832

Sylvia  
 Graham





BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION  
Tonya Pittman  
CAPM





# Healthy Start in Housing

# Our Team

- **Nadine Williams, MS LSWA**  
Program Manager
- **Sylvia Graham, BA**  
Program Coordinator
- **Sujei Bernardino, CHW**  
Public Health Advocate &  
Community Health Worker
- **Johnny Taylor**  
Public Health Advocate with  
Father Friendly Initiative



# About Healthy Start in Housing

Healthy Start in Housing (HSiH) is a innovative collaboration between the **Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)** and the **Boston Housing Authority (BHA)** that connects pregnant and parenting families experiencing homelessness and medically high-risk pregnancies to stable housing and intensive wraparound support.



# Healthy Start In Housing Application Process

The HSiH application process is designed to ensure that each family we support is ready for long-term housing stability and success. This process allows us to build trust, understand each family's unique needs, and confirm their eligibility for the program.

3 visits by HSiH home visitors to assess the client before completing the pre-screen

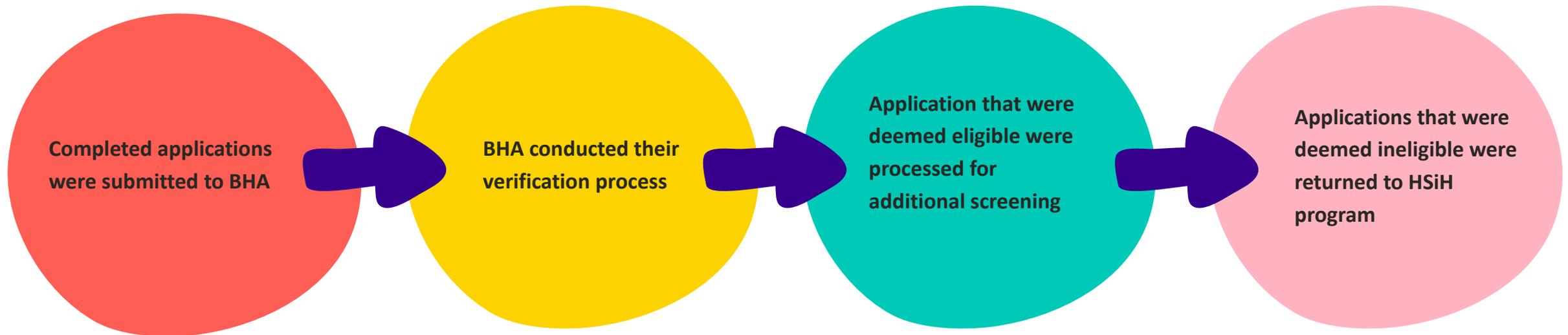
Complete HSiH Prescreen Document to confirm initial eligibility

If pregnant, get Pregnancy Letter with Due Date from OBGYN

Get medical letter with ongoing treatment from provider

Mandatory Workshops – Rental, Preliminary, Final (Must attend all 3)

# Boston Housing Authority Process (after applications are submitted to BHA)



# Results

From September 2019 until 2025, HSIH has:

- Serviced a total of 426 clients.
- 55 clients who have graduated from the program.
- 57 clients who are currently housed and active program.
- A total of 119 clients housed.



# Client Case Study

- 37-year-old Black American female
- Single mother of two (daughter, 6; son, 1)
- Homeless and living in a shelter
- Diagnosed with postpartum depression
- Hospitalized due to mental health condition
- Lost employment and housing
- Involved with DCF; Family Plan included housing
- Referred to HSiH by DCF





# **Boston's Fetal Infant Mortality Review**

# Who We Are



**Uchenna Ndulue, PhD, MPH**  
**Bureau Director**  
Child, Adolescent and Family Health



**Becky Cruz-Crosson, MA, LMHC**  
**Division Director**  
Healthy Start Systems  
Child, Adolescent and Family Health



**Adi Rattner Nevo, MD**  
**Medical Director**  
Healthy Start Systems  
Child, Adolescent and Family Health



**Joanne Suarez, MBe**  
**Senior Program Manager**  
Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Program



**Shoba Nair, PhD**  
**Director of Epidemiology and Evaluation**  
Public Health Sciences and Innovation



**Ella Douglas-Durham, PhD, MPH**  
**Public Health Scientist**  
Public Health Sciences and Innovation



**Andrea Jaramillo, RN, BSN, CHPN**  
**Nurse Coordinator**  
Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Program

# What is FIMR?

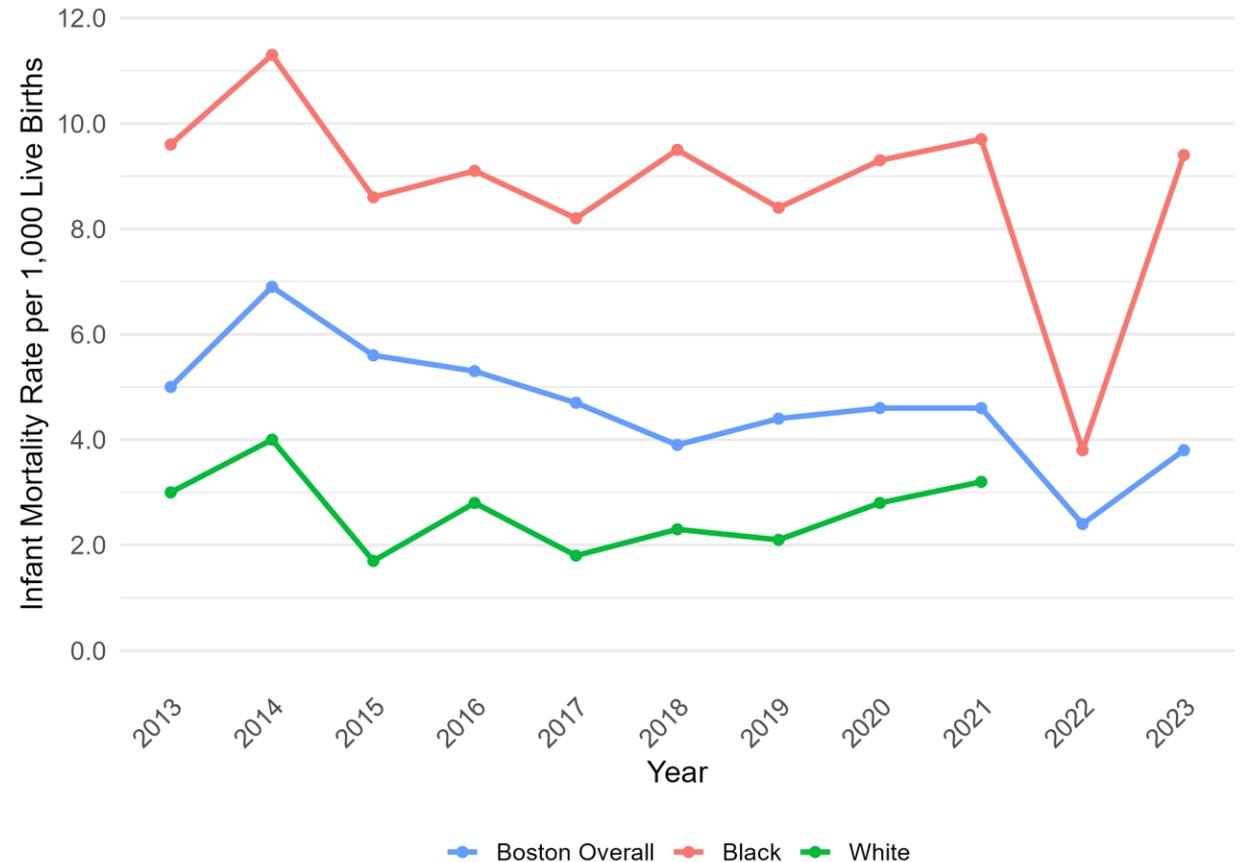
*“Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) is a community based, action-oriented process aimed at improving services, systems, and resources for women, infants, and families.” – National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention (NCFRP)*



Adapted from NCFRP

# Why Boston Needs a FIMR

- As of 2022, Massachusetts had the lowest infant mortality rate in the country
- But the state's overall success in this area is not shared equally across communities
- Black infants and gestational parents in Boston suffer adverse pregnancy outcomes at higher rates than their white counterparts



**Rates that are based on less than 5 deaths were suppressed and not included**  
Data Source: Boston Resident Live Births, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Boston Resident Deaths, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

# Boston FIMR: How Did We Get Here?

- The Boston Community Action Network (CAN) identified FIMR as one of its priority areas
- CAN members participated in the legislative process to advocate for FIMR bill
- Bill H.4999 signed into law by Governor in August 2024
- Simultaneously, the City of Boston and BPHC designated resources to establish a FIMR in Boston

Please Support and Vote **YES** on H.2312/H.2371/S.1474, *An Act relative to conducting fetal and infant mortality review (FIMR Bill)*

## **FIMRS SAVE LIVES!**

**27 States, More than Half of the U.S., Have FIMR Systems.**

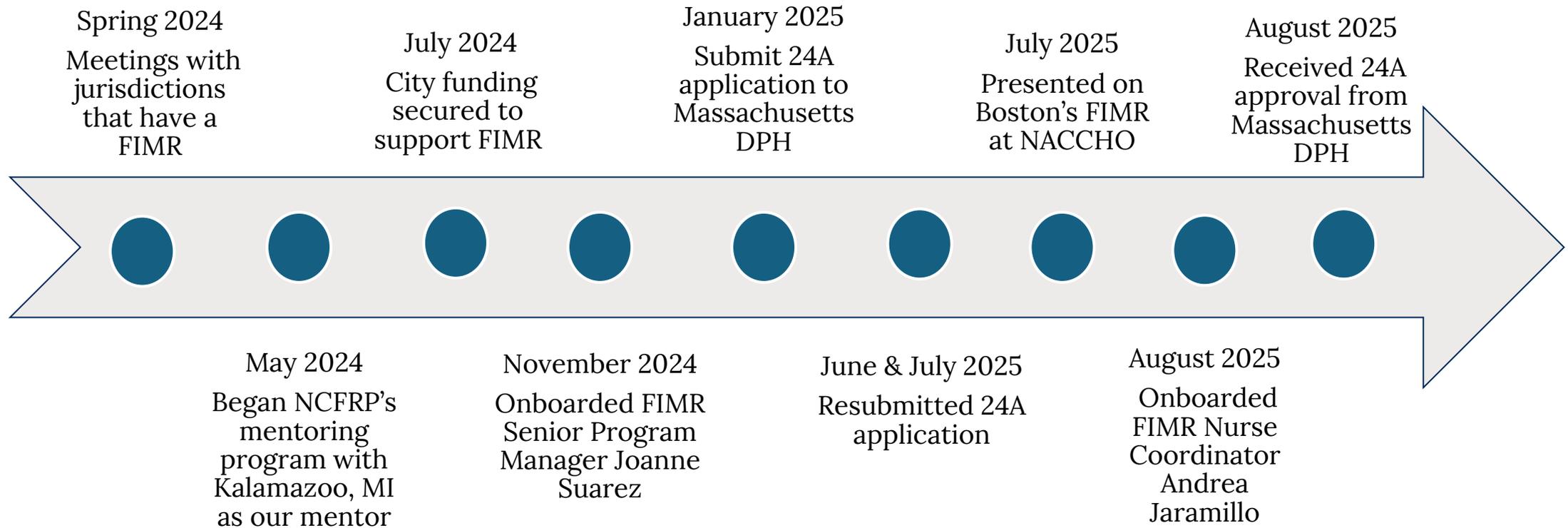
### **Why Doesn't Massachusetts?**



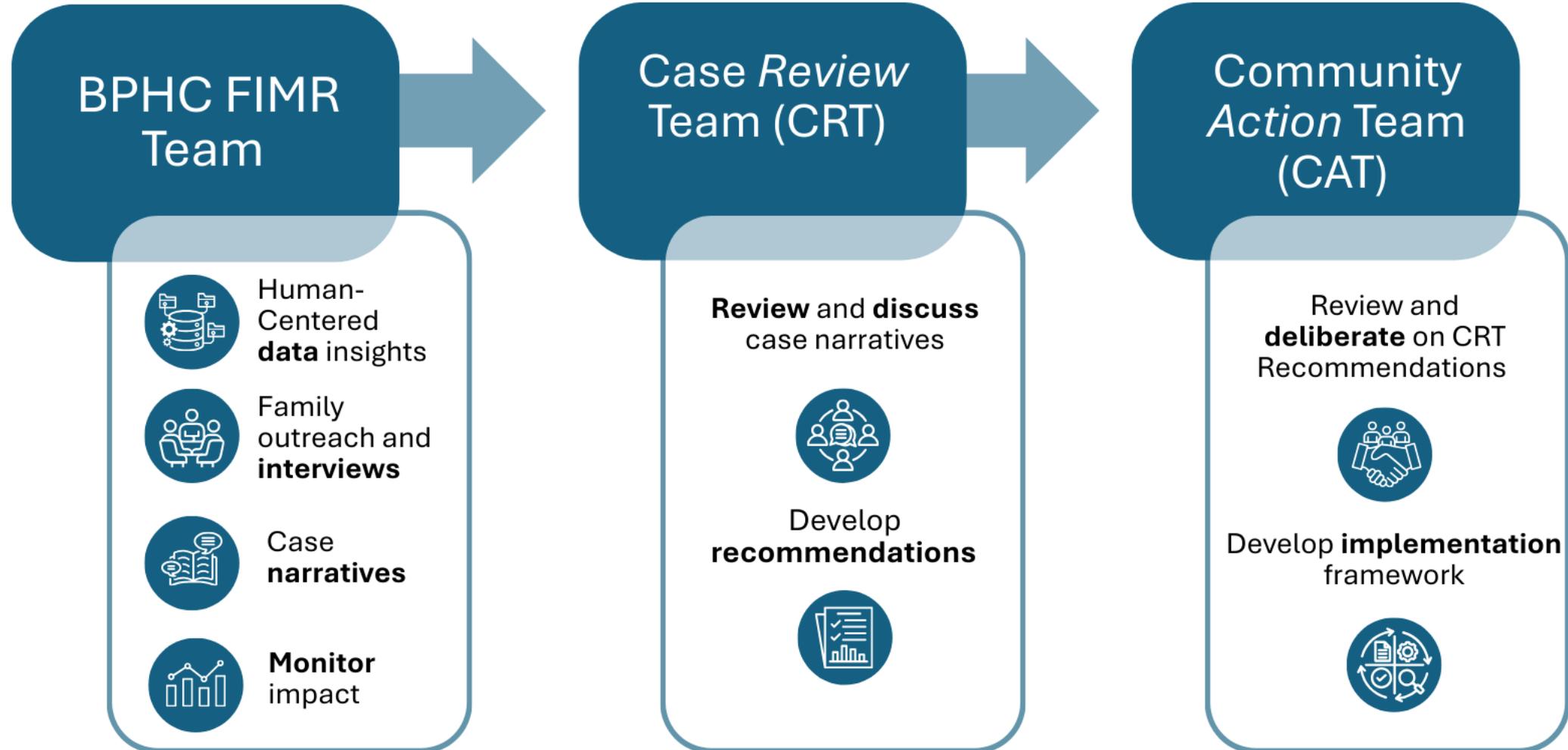
Stand with us, the Community Action Network, in our mission to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in infant mortality and poor birth outcomes.



# Boston FIMR: Milestones Achieved



# Key Program Activities



# Engaged Partners in Review & Action

## Case Review Team (CRT)

Professionals, agencies and members of the community that can **represent birthing families**, provide **medical services**, or offer **community resources**



- Medical experts, public health workers, social service providers

## Community Action Team (CAT)

Leaders that can **support large-scale system changes**, along with members who can define the **community perspective** on what health equity change should look like locally



- Elected officials, hospital leadership, parent advocates

# Next Steps

- **Develop and launch** external communication assets
- **Recruit CRT** and **CAT** members
- **Obtain** detailed linked infant mortality data from Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- **Conduct** initial family interviews
- **Integrate** FIMR within impacted communities by conducting review meetings at community-based organizations

# Thank you!

# Boston Board of Health

September 10, 2025

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