

THE COLLABORATIVE

(formerly NBEC)

Dear Friends, Funders, and Partners,

We are thrilled to present to you the 2022 Annual Report of The Collaborative (formerly the National Birth Equity Collaborative/NBEC)!

As we reflect on a year marred by continuous assaults on Black women and birthing people who have seen many of their rights rolled back further than they have been in a generation we continue to lean into our values of community, sisterhood, and joy and remain committed to undoing the harm caused by generations of inequitable care of Black patients within healthcare systems globally and here at home

In spite of these challenges to our humanity and the indisputable impact of racism on our health and wellbeing), we recognize the past year has also been one of incredible progress and opportunity that has also included a major transition for our organization.

In just the last few years, alongside our team of dedicated and collaborative experts, we have made monumental strides in improving maternal and infant health outcomes for Black families.

In addition to successfully building a network of stakeholders (partnering with over 100 organizations and institutions to promote a comprehensive approach to addressing racial disparities in maternal and infant health), we have conducted research, policy analysis, and community engagement, as well as developed evidence-based solutions that address the root causes of health inequities while also providing training and technical assistance to healthcare providers and community-based organizations in order to support the implementation of effective and culturally responsive interventions.

Our work, as highlighted throughout this report, has been instrumental in advancing health equity and ensuring that Black mamas, their babies, and their communities thrive. In keeping with our values, and to match the intention we bring to our work to dismantle systems of oppression while serving Black birthing people, we are proud to

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highlight that over the course of the last year we have successfully piloted a shared leadership model.

We have crystallized our shared leadership model and are excited to officially announce that The Collaborative is now being led by the Executive Leadership Team comprised of the organization's six (6) vice presidents.

This shared leadership model is a deliberate and effective way of organizing our team that is aligned with our culture and values of sisterhood, collaboration, and decolonization. Rather than relying on a traditional solitary leader, we distribute leadership responsibilities, ensuring that all six (6) vice presidents (3 programmatic, 3 operational) have a voice and a role in executive decision-making.

This approach allows for diverse perspectives and ideas to be represented and implemented, as well as reduces probability of burnout at a time when Black people face harm in all areas of our lives. Other organizations with similar shared leadership models that we admire include the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Center for Story-based Strategy, both of which prioritize collective decision-making and shared responsibility among team members.

As part of this shift, we are also excited to announce that in the coming months we will roll out an organizational rebrand that reflects our renewed and expanded vision and mission as well as a new visual identity. Along with this rebrand (which we look forward to sharing more about soon), We are beyond proud to announce our new leadership structure.

As we embark on a new year ahead, we would be remiss if we did not take this opportunity to honor and acknowledge the work of NBEC's founder Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, who has dedicated her career to improving maternal and infant health outcomes, particularly for Black women. Dr. Joia's work has been instrumental in raising awareness about the racial inequities in maternal and infant health and advocating for policy changes to address these disparities. While we are incredibly grateful for the

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groundbreaking work we have done under her leadership, we also respect her decision to sever ties with our fiscal sponsor the Praxis Project and wish her well in her future endeavors. As a leadership team, we are excited to move forward and continue our work under our new, collaborative leadership structure as The Collaborative.

With this change in leadership,(now more than ever), however, our work must continue. As noted in the latest reports from the CDC, the Black maternal health crisis has intensified, highlighting the urgent need to address the issue. It is essential that our work to improve maternal health outcomes for Black women continue, including advocacy, research, and policy changes to address the root causes of this crisis.

Finally, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude to The Praxis Project for their unwavering support and guidance as our fiscal sponsor over the course of the past year. Their partnership has been crucial in helping us achieve our mission and goals while managing this transition.

Additionally, we would like to thank all of our funding partners - especially our major funders – the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Pivotal Ventures, for their continued investment and confidence in our leadership, expertise, and the team's ongoing work. With their generous support, we look forward to continuing to create impactful programs and initiatives that strive towards safety, equity, and justice for Black birthing people until the world no longer has a need for our services.

In joy and sisterhood,

Jauna Crear, JD, MBA, Vice President of Finance and Compliance

Khalilah Elliott, Vice President of Institutional Development & Capacity Building

Carmen Green, MPH, Vice President of Research & Strategy

Shani Hunter, Vice President of Administration/Chief of Staff

Inas-Khalidah Mahdi, MPH, DrPH(c), Vice President of Equity-Centered Capacity Building

Nia Mitchell, MPH, Vice President, Center for Birth Equity Research and Praxis