



June 30, 2020

We here at FL BH IMPACT have made a commitment to work to dismantle racism and directly address health disparities and inequities. We are committed to doing the work and making real change not only within this program, but also within our own lives. Over the course of hundreds of years, racism has been institutionalized into U.S. health care systems and many structures in our society, propagating organizational practices and policies that marginalize and discriminate against African Americans and people of color. Today, institutional racism continues to plague the health of women, children and families across the state of Florida and throughout the United States. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, communities of color are disproportionately impacted. Currently, because of the very public violent deaths of George Floyd and other African Americans, our nation and the world are engaged in acts of protest, activism and dialogue on the public health crises of racism and police brutality.

How do we reframe our thinking as perinatal health care providers? How do we pursue sustainable change? As active members of the medical community, we here at FL BH IMPACT have identified several ways that we can respond to these questions, make structural changes to the operation of the BH IMPACT program and empower our healthcare community to do something about implicit bias and systemic racism.

Action Steps:

1. Address our own implicit bias and the role it plays in perpetuating disparities in perinatal and behavioral health care.
2. Address the necessity of self-reflection in addressing disparities, especially regarding the role that privilege, bias, and micro aggressions have in shaping the delivery of services.
3. Work as a team to identify power structures that create and maintain racial inequities within domains that are in the scope of our projects purview and create/update plans to address these issues.
4. Maintain a culturally sensitive and humble approach to providers and patients we serve.
5. Include accurate and up-to-date information on health disparities in our trainings and technical assistance activities.
6. Include information and updates regarding health equity in our other materials such as newsletters and websites and social media platforms.
7. Continue to include accurate and updated information on providers of color in our mental health resource directories and how best to access those mental health clinicians
8. Maintain up-to-date knowledge of the validity of clinical and research assessments and effectiveness of interventions on underserved populations.

Of course, our approaches and plans will continue to evolve as we work to implement these action steps. We welcome your input and ideas, as much of our responsibility going forward, lies in listening, taking action, and holding each other and ourselves accountable. We hope that you will join us in committing to do the work of moving our healthcare system towards equity for perinatal women of color in the state of Florida.

Warmly,

The FL BH IMPACT Team