Philadelphia Group Empowers New Black Moms to Breastfeed

CocoLife supports new moms via community-based resources, mental health services, breastfeeding education and more.

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A new community-based organization in Philadelphia aims to support mothers of color and improve breastfeeding rates, CBS News reports.

Breastfeeding is an optimal source of nutrients for most infants and can reduce the risk for health risks in new mothers and infants. A 2023 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, however, found that Black women are less likely to breastfeed compared with other racial groups.

The Black-owned online nonprofit CocoLife is dedicated to improving outcomes in Black maternal health via a community-empowered model of care. It offers various services, including one-on-one doula support during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum experiences, childbirth education workshops, monthly mental health support groups led by perinatal mental health experts that focus on stress management and adapting to lifestyle changes and more.

With support from volunteer "MOMbassadors," the organization serves moms throughout three key maternal stages: pregnancy, postpartum and loss of a child or significant loved one. MOMbassadors (MOM is an acronym for "maternal outcomes matter") cultivate a community of support for mothers as well as fathers, grandparents, community partners and more.

Black women in the United States are three to five times more likely to face pregnancy-related complications that can lead to death. What's more, Black infants are at a higher risk for premature birth or death.

Systemic racism in American childcare is often a factor for disparities in pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding rates. For example, Black women often return to work sooner after giving birth than women of other races. Many Black women also work hours that can make breastfeeding more

challenging, according to a 2015 research study.

Doulas are nonmedical professionals who are trained to offer education about pregnancy and postpartum periods, help guide patients through the health care system and offer emotional and physical support before, during and after childbirth.

Indeed, the presence of a doula during childbirth is associated with improved labor and delivery outcomes, reduced stress and higher rates of patient satisfaction, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Click here to view the full list of CocoLife's services.

To read more, click #Pregnancy. There, you'll find headlines such as "Rural Hospitals Built During Baby Boom Now Face Baby Bust," "Doctors Urge Congress to Improve Black Maternal Mortality Rates" and "Biden-Harris Administration Awards Over $558 Million to Improve Maternal and Child Health."

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