

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CHAMPS Wins the HHS Office on Women's Health Reducing Disparities in Breastfeeding Innovation Challenge Phase 2 Award

Boston, MA, June 2023 – Mississippi CHAMPS, a program of the Center for Health Equity, Education, and Research (CHEER) at Boston Medical Center, has won a second national award for reducing racial breastfeeding disparities in Mississippi. MS CHAMPS (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) is one of 10 US programs to receive the Reducing Disparities in Breastfeeding Innovation Challenge Phase 2 award, created by the Office on Women's Health to reward programs with a track record in increasing breastfeeding rates and decreasing disparities. CHAMPS was previously one of 15 awardees to receive the Phase 1 award in September 2021. As a Phase 2 awardee, CHAMPS received a prize of \$30,000 and has an opportunity to advance to the final phase.



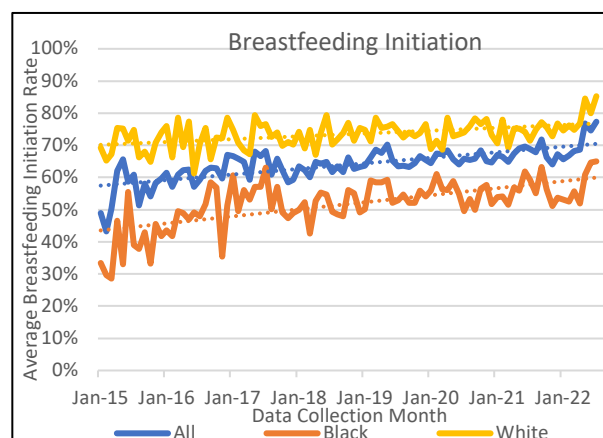
*CHAMPS hospital training*

MS CHAMPS seeks to improve maternal and child health outcomes and combat health disparities through the promotion of breastfeeding and Baby-Friendly practices across Mississippi. The program works with Mississippi birthing hospitals to help them meet the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and achieve and sustain Baby-Friendly designation. Additionally, MS CHAMPS supports partners in improving maternal-child health within historically underserved and vulnerable communities.

“We have been working in Mississippi for almost 10 years, and the shift in hospital practices has been amazing,” says Laura Burnham, MPH, Associate Director of CHEER and CHAMPS. “Evidence-based care is now the status quo, and the disparities in breastfeeding rates between Black and white patients have decreased.”

Since MS CHAMPS launched, the average rate of breastfeeding initiation at enrolled hospitals increased from 49% to 77% between January 2015 (when data collection began) and July 2022, and the average rate of exclusive breastfeeding increased from 18% to 40%. During this same period, 26 Mississippi hospitals gained Baby-Friendly designation, and 79% of Mississippi births now take place in Baby-Friendly hospitals. The rate of breastfeeding initiation for Black mother-infant dyads increased 32%, from 33% in January 2015 to 65% in July 2022.

**Breastfeeding rates by race over time among MS CHAMPS hospitals**





*ROSE Community Transformers training*

Mississippi partners include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), Every Mother, the Mississippi Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative, and the Mississippi Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Program (WIC). MS CHAMPS has also received funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Bower Foundation.

### **About the Office on Women's Health**

The Office on Women's Health was established in 1991 within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). OWH coordinates women's health efforts across HHS and addresses critical women's health issues by informing and advancing policies, educating healthcare professionals and consumers, and supporting innovative programs. Learn more at <https://www.womenshealth.gov>.

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