



# The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

## CALIFORNIA

**W**ith a population of more than 39 million residents, California is the most populous state in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

6.5% of the state population is comprised of Black individuals (approximately 2.1 million individuals), compared to 13.6% of the national population.<sup>2</sup>

In California, 40.3% is Hispanic; 34.7% of the population is white; 16% is Asian; 1.7% is American Indian and Alaska Native; and .5% is Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Slightly more than 4% are multi-racial.<sup>3</sup>

### Legislative Profile

- Governor Gavin Newsom (D) supports reproductive autonomy.
- Both the California House and Senate support reproductive autonomy.

### Policy Profile

#### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE<sup>4 5</sup>

- California expanded Medicaid in 2014, as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and, as a result:
  - » Almost 14 million Californians are now covered by Medicaid or CHIP.
  - » There was a 58% reduction in the uninsured rate in California from 2010 to 2019.
  - » There has been a 65% increase in Medicaid / CHIP enrollment since expansion went into effect.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in California is 6.6%; nationally, an average of 10.9% of Black people are uninsured.

#### HEALTH IMPACT OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS<sup>6 7</sup>

- Whites account for 36% of COVID-19 related deaths, which closely matches the overall white population. Blacks account for 7% of deaths, a number just slightly higher than the overall Black population. Hispanics account for a little over 40% of the population and 45% of deaths.

- In California, Black and Latino workers were the least likely to have jobs that enabled them to work remotely during the height of the pandemic.

#### ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE<sup>8</sup>

- Although *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned, pregnant people in California still have the legal right to abortion care.
- California guarantees the right to abortion before fetal viability and to protect the woman's life or health. Minors can obtain abortion care without parental notification or consent.
- Individuals and religious institutions may refuse to participate in an abortion.

#### FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES<sup>9</sup>

- California guarantees access to family planning services. The state explicitly allows all minors to consent to all family planning services, including contraception prescriptions and abortion care, without parental consent or notification.
- California provides free family planning and family-planning-related services to low-income individuals patients via Medicaid, which covers comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services for beneficiaries up to 138% of the federal poverty level.

- The state Family PACT program funds contraceptive care and services for sexually transmitted infections for uninsured people who earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level and those who are facing confidentiality barriers.

#### SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION<sup>10</sup>

- California state law requires public and charter schools to provide comprehensive sexual health education; this law is considered to be a national model.
- California requires public schools to provide sexuality education and HIV/STD prevention education at least once in middle school and high school. Educational content must be age-appropriate and medically accurate.
- Educational content must include information about abstinence and the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception.
- Educational curricula must be culturally competent with respect to all sexual orientations and gender identities. The education must include information on gender identity and expression; examples of relationships and couples must include same-sex relationships as examples.
- Parents and other caregivers can opt their children out of sexuality education and/or HIV/AIDS education classes.

*As a result of the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative (CMQCC), maternal mortality in California has declined significantly since 2006; California's rate is consistently lower than the U.S.' as a whole (12.8 vs. 17.3 for every 100,000 live births, in 2019).*

## Systemic Disparities

### STDS/STIS, INCLUDING HIV/AIDS<sup>11</sup>

- In California, in 2021, of the STI/STD diagnoses where race/ethnicity was known:
  - » There were 1,608 cases of Syphilis: 17% were among Black women; 38% were among white women; 41% were among Hispanic women, 1.7% were among Asian women; and 1.1% were among American Indian / Alaska Native women.
  - » There were 42,410 cases of Chlamydia: 18% were among Black women; 24% were among white women; 51% were among Hispanic women; and 5% were among Asian women.
  - » There were 18,534 cases of Gonorrhea: 24.4% were among Black women; 27% were among white women; 43% were among Hispanic women; and 3.4% were among Asian women.
- Among the 543 women who received an HIV diagnosis in 2022 for which race/ethnicity was known, 22% were Black women, 27% were white women, 42% were Hispanic women, 5% were Asian women, and 3% were multi-racial women.
- In 2021, 35% of Californian women's AIDS-related deaths were among Black women; 25% were among white women; 30% were among Hispanic women; 2% were among Asian women; and 7% were among multi-racial women.

### SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE CANCERS<sup>12</sup>

- In California, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 111.5 cancers for every 100,000 women. Black women's rate is 115.5 for every 100,000 women, compared to 126.4 and 87 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black Californians is 27.3 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 21.1 and 14.3 per 100,000 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 6.6 cancers for every 100,000 Californian women. The rate for Black women is 5.7 per 100,000 women, compared to 5.8 and 8.1 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black Californians is 2.9 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 1.9 and 2.6 per 100,000 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.

### MATERNAL & INFANT MORTALITY<sup>13 14 15</sup>

- As a result of the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative (CMQCC), maternal mortality in California has declined significantly since 2006; California's rate is consistently lower than the U.S.' as a whole (12.8 vs. 17.3 for every 100,000 live births, in 2019).
- New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that the U.S. maternal mortality rate increased in 2021, to 32.9 deaths for every 100,000 live births. The U.S. mortality rate for Black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.6 times the rate of white women (26.6).
- In 2019, for the first time, hypertensive disorders were not in the top five causes of pregnancy-related deaths in the state. The top five are currently: cardiovascular disease, hemorrhage, sepsis or infection, thrombotic pulmonary embolism, and amniotic fluid embolism.
- Although racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality have decreased, Black birthing people still have rates three to four times higher than all other racial/ethnic groups in California.
- The mortality rate for Black infants is three times higher than that for white infants in California and 2.3 times higher than Hispanic infants.

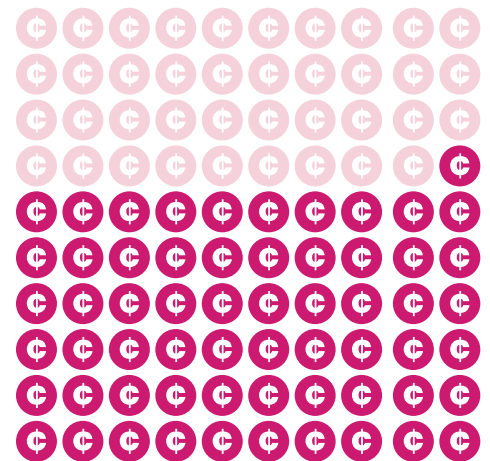
### LGBTQIA+ LIBERATION<sup>16 17</sup>

- State law explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity with respect to employment, housing, public accommodations, and in credit and lending policies.
- California law protects LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination with respect to health plan marketing, enrollment, terms, and benefits. State non-discrimination law prohibits health plans from denying medically necessary gender-affirming services.
- California laws allow LGBTQIA+ parents to adopt, including second-parent adoption.
- In California, health insurance companies cannot exclude transgender health services from their plans, and state employees are provided with trans-inclusive health benefits.

### ECONOMIC JUSTICE<sup>18 19 20 21 22</sup>

- In 2022, 18.7% of Black women in California lived in poverty, compared to 9.9% of white women.
- Black women in California earn 61 cents for every \$1 a white man makes. This wage gap costs Black women \$46,752 annually; over a 40-year career, a Black woman will lose \$1,336,280 to the wage gap. An Asian woman loses \$768,280 over a 40-year career, and a Hispanic woman loses \$1,930,120.
- A Black woman must work full-time until age 85 to make as much as a white man does by age 60. An Asian woman must work until age 72 years, and a Hispanic woman until she is 110.
- California requires all private sector employers to offer paid family leave for employees who have been paid \$300 during the base period. Leave is available for to bond with a new child; to care for one's own disability (including

### CALIFORNIA'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **61 CENTS** FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES, A WAGE GAP OF **39 CENTS**.

BLACK WOMEN'S **LIFETIME LOSSES** DUE TO CALIFORNIA'S WAGE GAP ARE

**\$1,336,280**

National Women's Law Center (NWLC), *Lifetime Wage Gap Losses State by State*, Washington (DC): NWLC, 2023. Online: <https://nwlc.org/resource/the-lifetime-wage-gap-state-by-state/>

pregnancy) or for a family member who has a serious health condition; and for a qualifying exigency stemming from a family member being on, or having an impending call for, active duty.

- The state's minimum wage is \$15.50/hour for all employers; some counties have higher rates.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE<sup>23 24 25</sup>

- California is one of 9 states that have actively reduced their prison population by 30% or more (the others are AK, NJ, NY, CT, AL, RI, VT, and HI).
- However, California is also one of 7 states where the Black/white prison population's disparity is greater than 9 to 1 (the others are CT, IA, ME, MN, NJ, and WI).
- Under state law, police officers may only use deadly force when it is "necessary" (vs. when it is "reasonable").
- California law prevents women from being shackled in state prisons or jails if they are pregnant or in postpartum recovery.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN<sup>26 27 28</sup>

- More than one-third of Californians have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV), either physical or sexual, and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes (34.9% of women and 31.1% of men).
- In 2018, domestic violence homicides comprised 10.7% of all California homicides.
- Black women in California experience even higher rates than women of other racial/ethnic groups: 42.5% of Black women have reported experiencing IPV, compared to 39.3% and 30.2% of for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
- Since 2015, police have killed 58 women in California; 9 of whom were Black, 22 of whom were white, and 16 of whom were Hispanic.

# Almost one-third (32.9%) of women currently living in California report having been the victim of violence, sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner.

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We are a national partnership focused on lifting up the voices of Black women leaders at the national, regional, and state level in our ongoing policy fight to secure Reproductive Justice for all women and girls.



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*Because the Reproductive Justice framework encompasses bodily integrity and autonomy, our use of the term "women" includes cis, femmes, trans, agender, gender non-binary, and gender non-confirming individuals.*