

**REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL
AND LINDSEY HORVATH**

February 7, 2023

Investigation into the Death of April Valentine While Giving Birth at Centinela Hospital

On January 10, 2023, 31-year-old April Valentine tragically lost her life while giving birth to her daughter at Centinela Hospital in Inglewood. According to Ms. Valentine’s family, she complained of pain in her legs for hours during her hospitalization. In testimony before the Board of Supervisors (Board) on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, Ms. Valentine’s family reported that Ms. Valentine’s complaints went unanswered, and nurses failed to pass along critical information to her doctors. Ms. Valentine stopped breathing and died tragically, which necessitated an emergency Cesarean to deliver her daughter, Aniya Heavenly April Robertson. Sadly, Ms. Valentine never had the chance to meet or hold her baby girl, Aniya.

Appallingly, Ms. Valentine’s story is lived too often by Black women in the State of California (State). Black women and birthing people are four to six times more likely to die from pregnancy or birth-related causes than those in all other racial and ethnic groups.¹ A survey across the State found that Black mothers and birthing people reported experiencing discrimination during childbirth and elevated anxiety and depression during

¹ [PAMR Report from 2002 to 2007 Maternal Death Reviews \(cmqcc.org\)](https://cmqcc.org/pamr-report-2002-2007-maternal-death-reviews)

- MORE -

MOTION

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and after pregnancy.² Self-reported experiences of racism are associated with low birth weight and preterm birth, increasing the risk of infant mortality. Black women and birthing people are also more likely to experience barriers to high quality care.³ Hospital quality can account for nearly 50% of the racial disparity in maternal illness.⁴

Senate Bill 464 (Mitchell), known as the California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act, requires hospitals that provide perinatal care to implement an evidence-based implicit bias training program, including refresher courses, for all health care providers involved in perinatal care of patients within their facilities. It is imperative to recognize that Black women deserve better. Bias, implicit or explicit, should not impact a woman's ability to deliver a full-term baby or to survive childbirth.

Like many families across the State who have lost their loved ones during childbirth, Ms. Valentine's family is still facing many unanswered questions, nearly one month later. On behalf of Ms. Valentine and baby Aniya, the family made a passionate plea to our Board to help them find answers to heartbreaking questions surrounding the circumstances of her death. Our Board has an opportunity to use our position and the power of our influence to shine a light on Ms. Valentine's untimely death and the systemic and racist practices that threaten Black families throughout our State.

IWE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to send five-signature letters to Governor Gavin Newsom, California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly, State Attorney General Rob Bonta, State Senator Steven Bradford, and State Assemblymember Tina McKinnor urging a State investigation into the care and circumstances surrounding the death of Ms. April Valentine, with a report back from State officials to Ms. Valentine's family as soon as reasonably possible on the outcomes of the investigation. The letter should also request a review of Centinela Hospital's compliance with the California Dignity in

² [listening-to-black-mothers-in-california.pdf \(nationalpartnership.org\)](#)

³ [The weathering hypothesis and the health of African-American women and infants: evidence and speculations - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Site of delivery contribution to black-white severe maternal morbidity disparity \(ajog.org\)](#)

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Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.

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