



## Department of Communications

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### **MAYOR KAREN FREEMAN-WILSON JOINS DC MAYOR BOWSER, OTHER MAYORS AND LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY FOR DC'S FIRST MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH SUMMIT**

*Leaders and Experts from Across the U.S. Explore Strategies to Improve Perinatal Health and  
Address Racial Disparities in Birth Outcomes*

**Gary, Indiana-** Today Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser hosted other Mayors, leaders, and experts from across the country for DC's first Maternal and Infant Health Summit. Mayor Bowser extended an invitation to Mayor Freeman-Wilson to participate as a Co-Host for the Summit in June.

Other participating Mayors in the Summit included Mayor Toni Harp (New Haven, CT), Vi Lyles (Charlotte, NC), Catherine Pugh (Baltimore, MD), Lovely A. Warren (Rochester, NY), and Karen Weaver (Flint, MI) leading a discussion with experts and developing a nationwide agenda to address the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality experienced by women of color in Washington, DC and across the nation.

"The opportunity to hold a healthy newborn is one of the most precious moments in a parent's life. That opportunity is stolen from far too many families and replaced with heartbreak because mothers don't have access to quality health care. We must do everything in our power to prevent these tragedies and protect those precious moments," said Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson.

The Gary Health Department partners with Marram Health Care to provide prenatal classes offered twice a month for expecting mothers. Classes include Shaken Baby Syndrome, SIDS, Breastfeeding, STD's, Labor and Delivery, Healthy Eating and Effects

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of Smoking during pregnancy. A father's initiative has also been implemented, "Men Earning and Learning" to encourage men to attend prenatal care and newborn care classes. Citizens are encouraged to utilize the resources of the Gary Health Department when in need of maternal and infant and all health services.

The summit, which was free and open to the public, was an opportunity for elected officials, health experts, and DC residents to discuss issues regarding perinatal health and racial disparities in birth outcomes. The event featured panel discussions and a luncheon focused on best infant and maternal health practices.

"This summit is about addressing issues that affect mothers, babies, and families here in DC and across the entire nation," said Mayor Bowser. "By working together, we can move closer to ensuring all women have access to high-quality health care before, during and after child birth."

In addition to the Mayor co-hosting the inaugural summit in DC, Freeman-Wilson, who is also the First Vice President of the National League of Cities participated on the Mayoral Panel-Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned.

To learn more about Maternal and Infant Health Summit, visit [dcmaternalhealth.com](http://dcmaternalhealth.com).

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