

**ACOG 2020 DISTRICT II VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Junior Fellow Research Day Oral Presentation and iPoster Session Contests**

**RESEARCH ABSTRACT FORM**

**NAME:** Shilpa Kalluru, MD, MPH

**RESEARCH TITLE:** Navigating systemic racism: assessing and optimizing the role of maternal health community health workers in New York City

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**INTRODUCTION:**

In New York City, Black and Latina women are at increased risk of maternal morbidity and mortality. Community based interventions, specifically the community health worker (CHW) model, have shown success in a variety of low resource settings in improving maternal outcomes. Currently, there is a paucity of CHW programs in NYC focusing on maternal health care. Saving Mothers and the Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership (NMPP) have partnered to conduct a needs assessment among CHWs in NYC as part of a pilot project working to optimize and standardize maternal health CHW training.

**METHODS:**

Eleven CHWs participated in a needs assessment survey. This 29-item survey investigated demographics, barriers to healthy pregnancy, CHW roles, training and preparedness, perceptions of the CHW model, and job satisfaction.

**RESULTS:** Primary barriers to healthy pregnancy included inadequate health care, language barriers and a care team that does not listen. CHW roles included connecting clients to social services and advocating for individual and community health needs. Participants expressed great pride in their ability to help their clients. CHW training was varied and noted a lack of confidence in recognizing and communicating health risks to low health literacy clients.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

The current CHW maternal health training in NYC is non-standardized. Future training for CHWs in maternal health should focus on identifying pregnancy risks, health literacy, communication strategies and self-advocacy in order to optimize the impact of CHWs in NYC and further address racial disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality.