

Orange Square Receives SBIR Grant and Supplemental Funding from National Institutes of Health to Address Postpartum Care

Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grant funds will support development of a human-centered web-based tool for postpartum self-care, with focus on COVID related concerns in underserved communities.

Principal Investigators

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This Grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities within the National Institutes of Health will enable Orange Square to bring research, design and community together to develop a postpartum tool with and for underserved women:

Underserved women are disproportionately affected by maternal mortality and morbidity and there is a need to better understand their areas of greatest concern. The current COVID-19 crisis added burdens for birthing women, further complicating their postpartum journey.

Understanding these concerns through current evidence, clinical practice, and conversations with women and birthing providers will inform development of a postpartum self care web based tool which can reduce barriers for women, identify relevant postpartum challenges, and lead to appropriate postpartum care.

As an organization committed to solving the right problem from a human-centered perspective, Orange Square will develop a robust mobile tool for women who are in the postpartum period and face challenges accessing appropriate postpartum information and guidance. Our development grant starts with four objectives:

- First, to gather input from key stakeholders, especially women in the third trimester and postpartum period to inform the design, key content, and interactive technological components of the mobile program.
- Second, to include input from community based postpartum care providers, bringing the perspectives of birthing caregivers and birthing people together.

- Third, to develop a proof of concept which illustrates the content, approach, and direction of the postpartum care tool in a culturally relevant way.
- Fourth, to seek input from women who are in, or have recently been through the postpartum period to test the tool for feasibility, impact on health outcomes, and to identify areas for revision before building the complete tool under a Phase II grant.

Why is this important?

In the United States, the postpartum period is a critical time for both maternal and child health, yet the mortality rate remains stubbornly high compared with other developed, high-income countries.



More than half of all maternal deaths occur postpartum from one day to one year after birth, many of which are avoidable, and leave a gaping hole for newborns and their families.

Even more troubling is that this poor outcome is linked to racial and ethnic disparities that disproportionately affect black women, who are 3-4 times more likely to experience maternal mortality than white women. Further impacting this particular population are the financial and access challenges resulting from the pandemic and related economic crisis.

3 to 4x
more likely



Holistically bridging the gap for underserved women can be achieved by addressing physical, cultural, and information barriers surrounding postpartum care. Creating tools and programs that provide an empowering self care approach is an important component for enriching postpartum care to improve patient outcomes

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