

URGENT CALL TO ACTION TO ADDRESS BLACK MATERNAL DEATH RATES IN THE UNITED STATES

Pro Bono Effort Led by Dr. Shalon Maternal Action Project, Population Reference Bureau, and TANK Worldwide

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, March 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project, Population Reference Bureau and TANK Worldwide unveiled a gut-wrenching awareness campaign to raise funds to address the causes of the alarmingly high Black maternal death rates in the United States. The campaign titled,

['Last Lullabye'](#) is a national awareness campaign launching at the cross-section of three critical and highly relevant cultural moments: Women's History Month (March), Minority Health Month (April), and Black Maternal Health Week (w/o April 11). The campaign brings to life the late Dr. Shalon's voice and mission through a custom version of the "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" lullaby.

“

It is unacceptable that Black women are still dying at such high rates post-pregnancy & during childbirth. The same health inequities my daughter, Dr. Shalon, fought so hard to eradicate took her life”

Wanda Irving, mother of Dr. Shalon



Dr. Shalon Irving with daughter, Soleil, 1 week before her death.

The health inequities faced by Black women in the United States have reached a critical point, with Black mothers dying at alarmingly higher rates than their white counterparts. The Population Reference Bureau ([PRB](#)) reports that the Black maternal mortality rate is 3.5 times higher than that of white women.(1) In some cities, the risk increases to 8x more likely, another study found.(2) The CDC reports that 84% of maternal deaths are preventable.(3) Recent CDC data posted on March 16th, shows a 40% spike in maternal deaths in 2021, marking it as one of the worst maternal mortality rate increases in US history.(4)

This unacceptable and preventable trend highlights the need for a concerted effort to address the root causes of these health inequities, including systemic racism, lack of access to quality healthcare, and socioeconomic barriers.

The “Last Lullabye” campaign is one last song to society from Dr. Shalon who passed away from preventable complications just 3 weeks after giving birth to her daughter, Soleil. Building on the “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” lullaby which was the theme of Dr. Shalon’s baby shower, a custom version of the song was created using AI technology to bring the voice of Dr. Shalon back to raise awareness and combat the inequities still faced by Black mothers every day. The song, originally posted on YouTube, drives to [mylastlullaby.com](https://www.mylastlullaby.com) and will be shared by podcast hosts and influencers across social media platforms.

In line with Dr. Shalon’s lifework as an advocate who fought for the health of vulnerable communities, the campaign aims to honor her memory by picking up her torch to increase awareness of the Black maternal health crisis and develop and promote evidence-based strategies that improve health outcomes for Black birthing people and families.

Dr. Shalon stated, “I see inequity wherever it exists. I am not afraid to call it by name and work hard to eliminate it. I vow to create a better earth.”

“It is unacceptable that in the United States, a country with some of the best medical technology in the world, Black women are still dying at such high rates during pregnancy and childbirth. The same health inequities she fought so hard to eradicate took her life,” said Wanda Irving, mother of Dr. Shalon and Co-Founder of the Dr. Shalon’s Maternal Action Project.

“It is critical to continue to research and support evidence-based policies and practices that can shed light on these inequities and help inform decision-making and policy changes needed in our world today,” said Diana Elliott, Vice President of U.S. Programs at the Population Reference Bureau.

All Americans are being asked to share the song with the [#LastLullabye](https://www.mylastlullaby.com) hashtag on their social media to drive awareness and donate to Dr. Shalon’s Maternal Action Project and Population Reference Bureau via the website. Funds will support needed ongoing evidence-based research and the launch of a camp dedicated to providing the resources and support for the young children who lost their mothers from these preventable maternal deaths. The Camp will be called ‘Sunny Days’, named after the nickname “Sunny” which Dr. Shalon used to call her daughter, Soleil.

“Only with mass support can we sustain the conversation and push institutions and the government to create real change in the healthcare system,” added Jill Mastroianni, Chief Marketing Officer at TANK Worldwide.

For more information, visit <https://www.mylastlullaby.com>

For interviews with the following members please reach out to Jill Mastroianni at jillian.mastroianni@tankww.com.

Wanda Irving, mother of Dr. Shalon and founder of Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project

Diana Elliott, VP of US Programs at the Population Reference Bureau

Marie Thoma, Ph.D., co-author of study finding Black maternal mortality much higher than previously known, University of Maryland

Marty Martinez, Chief Creative Officer at TANK Worldwide

About TANK Worldwide

TANK WW is a creative advertising agency that uses their craft to have a positive impact on human lives within the health and wellness space. TANK WW specializes in developing creative campaigns that will drive brand awareness and behavior change while also addressing the most important issues facing our society today. TANK's clients include some of the largest global pharmaceutical companies in the world as well as small start-ups with big ambitions. TANK is part of Grey/AKQA Group. Its parent company is WPP (NYSE: WPP). To learn more, visit <https://tankww.com/>.

About Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project

Dr. Shalon's Maternal Action Project is dedicated to increasing awareness of the Black maternal health crisis and developing and promoting evidence-based strategies that improve health outcomes for Black birthing people and families. To learn more visit <https://www.drshalonsmap.org/>.

About Population Reference Bureau

Population Reference Bureau promotes and supports evidence-based policies, practices, and decision-making to improve the health and well-being of people throughout the world. Your support can help them keep advancing research that drives change. To learn more, visit www.prb.org.

References:

- (1) <https://www.prb.org/resources/maternal-death-among-u-s-black-women/>
- (2) <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ms/pregnancy-associated-mortality-report-2011-2015.pdf>
- (3) <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/docs/pdf/Pregnancy-Related-Deaths-Data-MMRCs-2017-2019-H.pdf>
- (4) <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm>

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