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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KHF contribution to assist with reducing racial disparities in
Sedgwick County maternal, infant mortality**

WICHITA, Kan. – The Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) recently contributed \$50,000 to the Wichita Birth Justice Society, a grassroots, nonprofit organization leading community-driven efforts to reduce racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality in Sedgwick County.

While infant mortality has decreased over the years, Sedgwick County continues to have a higher rate of infant mortality than the state average (6.8 deaths compared to 5.9 deaths), according to 2015-2019 data from the [Kansas Department of Health and Environment](#) (KDHE). KDHE indicates among 1,000 live births by race/ethnicity in Sedgwick County, 11.6 Black, 8.1 Hispanic and 5 White infants die.

“Wichita Birth Justice Society’s work is aimed at addressing these alarming disparities by focusing on equitable approaches to reduce infant mortality among people of color,” said Teresa Miller, KHF president and CEO. “With core support funding, they can focus on their critical work instead of burdensome grant requirements.”

Sapphire Garcia-Lies, Wichita Birth Justice Society president said they were thrilled to receive core operating support from KHF to advance their mission.

“We are grateful to KHF for their commitment to equity and their belief in our mission,” Sapphire Garcia-Lies said. “This funding will allow us to bolster our advocacy efforts on behalf of families of color in Kansas, who are much more likely than their White neighbors to experience a maternal or infant death around the time of childbirth.”

Wichita Birth Justice Society is working to create a future where Black and Brown parents and babies no longer disproportionately die or suffer from medical complications. It does this through advocating for systems-level changes, educating people of color through initiatives that champion bodily autonomy and informed decision making; and

increasing representation of people of color in birth professions and other community capacities that influence the health and wellness of families.

“Equity is at the center of all we do, with programs such as the Neighborhood Doula Advocates initiative, which provides boots-on-the-ground support to families when it counts the most,” Garcia-Lies said.

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ABOUT THE KANSAS HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Kansas Health Foundation is based in Wichita, but statewide in its focus. With a mission to improve the health of all Kansans, KHF envisions a culture in which every Kansan can make healthy choices where they live, work and play. During the past 35 years, KHF has provided more than \$600 million in grants to improve health in Kansas communities.

ABOUT WICHITA BIRTH JUSTICE SOCIETY

Wichita Birth Justice Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization focused on leading community-driven efforts to reduce racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality. Its strategy addresses the crisis of racial disparities in maternal and infant health from multiple angles.