

**Background:** A Black woman is 3 to 4 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than a White woman. American Indian/Alaskan Native women are 3 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than White women. Research shows that inequities in outcomes are often due to the difference in how pregnant people are treated by perinatal health professionals before, during, and after pregnancy based on race (racism). Women of color who also have substance use disorder have even worse outcomes.

The Institute for Perinatal Quality Improvement's (PQI) SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway is a train-the-trainer program that utilizes quality improvement methods to equip participants with essential antiracist tools. SPEAK UP is an acronym, mnemonic and most importantly a call-to-action. The pathway is action-oriented and supports individuals and groups to outline, develop and implement action plans to work individually, within organizations, and community groups to dismantle racism, provide quality equitable, respectful care, and eliminate perinatal health disparities.

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**The long-term goal of the program is:** By 2035 SPEAK UP Champions will eliminate perinatal disparities in their organizations and communities throughout the United States.

Figure 1: SPEAK UP Acronym and Mnemonic

## HOW CAN I **SPEAK UP** AGAINST RACISM?

### **Set Limits**

Allow only racially respectful speech and actions in your work space. #NotOnMyWatch

### **Practice and Prepare**

Plan how to act and to disrupt conversations and behaviors that are disrespectful, racist, or dehumanizing.

### **Express Your Concerns**

Be bold, clear, and straightforward. Discuss why you are concerned.

### **Apologize**

Say you're sorry, change your behavior, and ensure reconciliation if you said or did something that perpetuates racism.

### **Keep Improving**

Be courageous. Become aware of your implicit and explicit biases. Seek feedback and collect data so you can keep learning and improving.

### **Uncover and Learn**

Be curious, mindful, and open to new perspectives as you deepen your understanding of racism and its harmful impact.

### **Persuade Others**

Spread the word and encourage others to #SpeakUpAgainstRacism!

**Sign the SPEAK UP Pledge at**  
[www.perinatalqi.org/page/SPEAKUP](http://www.perinatalqi.org/page/SPEAKUP)

## Testimonials

*"Have you place at the right time? That's how I felt about this training. Your passion resonates deeply with me. I read the email about this event literally days after thinking on how to impact the maternal mortality issue that plagues my community."*

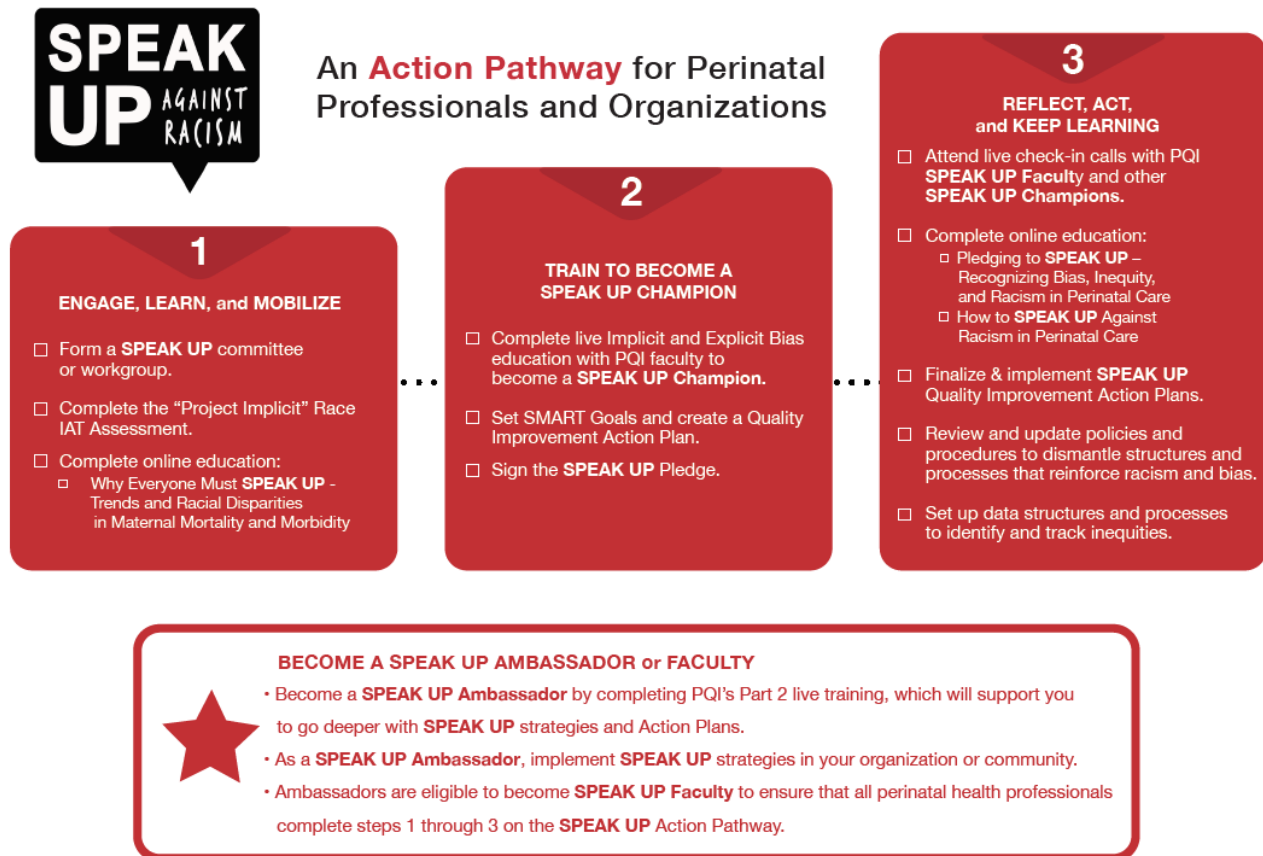
*"This training was great and you both were excellent! Thanks for making this a safe room and allowing for this conversation to take place on this very important topic."*

*"I truly LOVED this training! The information and the courage that was given was wonderful. I'm grateful!!! Thank you for Speaking up for black women!"*

## SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway:

Dismantling racism is a journey, not a sprint. The SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway is designed to provide on-going support and guidance for SPEAK UP Champions and Ambassadors to create SPEAK UP anti-racism action plans to improve and eliminate inequities in structures and processes that contribute to disparities in perinatal outcomes. The multi-step approach requires dedicated commitment and continued action of all perinatal health professionals to ensure equity throughout all levels of the healthcare system. PQI is working to support all perinatal health professionals to complete steps 1 through 3 of the SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway. A select number of participants will be chosen to become SPEAK UP faculty for the program. PQI's SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: SPEAK UP Against Racism Action Pathway



For inquiries about the SPEAK UP Program email Debra Bingham, DrPH, RN, FAAN, Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Perinatal Quality Improvement at [dbingham@perinatalqi.org](mailto:dbingham@perinatalqi.org) or Renée Byfield, MS, RN, FNP, Program Director at [rbyfield@perinatalqi.org](mailto:rbyfield@perinatalqi.org).