

Black women in the United States face a maternal mortality crisis, with rates nearly three times higher than those of non-Hispanic white women. This disparity is driven by systemic inequities such as implicit bias, limited access to quality care, and structural racism. Leading causes of death, including preeclampsia and postpartum cardiomyopathy, are often preventable with equitable interventions. Addressing these inequities requires not just identifying them, but implementing actionable solutions that span clinical care, education, and policy reform to ensure all mothers receive the quality care they deserve.

As an aspiring Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist, I am deeply committed to addressing these inequities and ensuring that every patient, regardless of race, receives compassionate, high-quality care. Raised by my mother, grandmother, and sister, I grew up surrounded by strong Black women whose resilience and sacrifices inspired my calling to serve this community. Their strength and stories fueled my passion for confronting the systemic barriers that disproportionately impact Black mothers and families. As a Black male in medicine, I recognize the profound responsibility and privilege of being a representative voice and advocate in this space. This responsibility drives my mission to be a sworn enemy of Black maternal health disparities, championing equitable care and outcomes through clinical excellence, research, and advocacy.

The path to addressing Black maternal mortality must shift from identifying disparities to implementing solutions and ultimately eliminating them. Research has long illuminated the inequities in Black maternal health, but the next step requires actionable interventions. By designing, testing, and refining culturally competent care models, scaling evidence-based initiatives, and tailoring approaches to meet community-specific needs, we can create lasting change.

As a future Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist, I plan to address this issue through a triad of clinical care, research, and advocacy. Clinically, I aim to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care that acknowledges and combats systemic barriers. In research, my focus will be on translating data into action, investigating scalable interventions to reduce disparities, and informing best practices for improving maternal outcomes. Advocacy will drive my commitment to equitable policies and the empowerment of underserved communities. Mentorship will also play a pivotal role, as I work to foster representation and guide underrepresented students and trainees toward careers in medicine.

I am not waiting until I become an Ob/Gyn or Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist to address maternal health disparities. Through the Moms2B Program, I have worked directly with high-risk communities to provide prenatal education and resources, helping reduce barriers to care for underserved populations. I've attended outreach events in high-risk areas, recruiting pregnant women and partnering with organizations that share a mission to reduce maternal and infant mortality. By organizing weekly sessions on topics such as recognizing complications like preeclampsia and postpartum depression, we have improved participants' knowledge and self-advocacy skills. These collaborations have empowered women to advocate for their health, ensured access to necessary care, and emphasized a community-centered approach that highlights the importance of meeting patients where they are. Moving forward, I plan to continue

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SMFM Medical Student Scholars Program Essay

creating partnerships like these to amplify impact and develop scalable interventions that align with SMFM's mission to reduce disparities in maternal and fetal health.

As President of Black Men in Medicine, I launched mentorship initiatives that united over 50 underrepresented pre-medical students, medical students, residents, and faculty, fostering representation, and building a pipeline into medicine. These efforts have contributed to Ohio State's position as one of the leading medical schools in enrolling underrepresented students in the country, demonstrating how representation and mentorship can drive systemic change. Similarly, as President of my medical school class, I spearheaded reforms to promote equity in medical education, including advocating for transparent grading and the review of curricular content for racial and ethnic disparities. These experiences reflect my commitment to addressing inequities at multiple levels—from empowering patients to shaping systems. This multifaceted approach mirrors the mission of SMFM, which emphasizes reducing disparities through education, advocacy, and systemic change. The program will equip me to build on these initiatives, scaling solutions to broader populations while refining my clinical and research skills to advance equity in maternal healthcare.

The SMFM Medical Student Scholars Program aligns seamlessly with my ambitions in medicine by providing unparalleled opportunities for mentorship, research exposure, and career development. Being paired with experienced Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialists will offer invaluable guidance as I refine my clinical and research goals, while the Annual Pregnancy Meeting will immerse me in cutting-edge innovations that can directly inform my future practice. As part of a cohort of five student scholars, I will also have the unique opportunity to collaborate and network with peers equally passionate about advancing maternal-fetal health, fostering connections with the future leaders of the field.

Additionally, the program's focus on career development will broaden my perspective on diverse pathways in MFM, preparing me to enter residency with the skills and mindset to lead systemic change. Receiving funding to attend the program alleviates financial barriers, allowing me to fully engage with these transformative opportunities. This program will empower me to advance my mission of combining clinical care, research, and advocacy to create a more equitable healthcare system for all.

The fight against maternal health disparities is not merely a professional pursuit—it is a deeply personal mission. I have seen firsthand the toll of inequities and the transformative power of representation in inspiring change. Standing at the intersection of clinical care, research, and advocacy, I am committed to improving outcomes for Black mothers and their families.

The SMFM Medical Student Scholars Program is more than an opportunity; it is a launchpad for this mission. Through its mentorship, resources, and focus on innovation, the program will empower me to translate ambition into action, driving meaningful change as a future Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist. Together, we can transition from identifying disparities to implementing solutions and, ultimately, eliminating inequities in maternal healthcare. With the support of this program, I am ready to lead, mentor, and reimagine a future where equity and excellence in care are a reality for all.