



## Volunteering as Self-Care

Volunteering has profound benefits for mental and physical well-being. It fosters social connections, reduces stress, improves physical health, provides a sense of purpose, and offers cognitive benefits. Engaging in volunteer activities is a holistic approach to health that benefits both the community and individuals. Studies show that volunteering is linked to lower blood pressure, reduced cardiovascular disease risk, and improved cognitive function.

Ready to volunteer? Visit [volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) to get matched with upcoming volunteering opportunities in your area or abroad. Help yourself while helping others!

According to a study published in the *Gerontologist*, middle-aged volunteers are less likely to have abdominal fat and high blood glucose than non-volunteers. They also had healthier levels of “good” HDL cholesterol. Older volunteers are less likely to have high blood pressure than their non-volunteer counterparts.



## Equity in Every Birth

The disparities in maternal healthcare outcomes between Black and white women in the U.S. are staggering, with Black women three times more likely to face pregnancy-related complications. The biggest challenges to accessing quality healthcare are due to geographic and socioeconomic factors, and a shortage of providers.

### So, how do we address the disparities in Black maternal healthcare?

- **Prenatal Care Programs:** Maternity care is considered “essential health benefits,” so all qualified health plans must cover the care.
- **Telehealth Services:** Telehealth can improve access to care, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- **Doula and Midwifery Support:** Doulas and midwives can provide additional support during pregnancy and childbirth.
- **Mental Health Services:** Services such as counseling and therapy can help prevent and manage stress, anxiety, and depression.
- **Targeted Education:** Education campaigns aimed at improving the health literacy of Black women can empower them to advocate for their health and make informed decisions.



According to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), over 80% of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. between 2017 and 2019 were determined to be preventable.

## BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT In-Network vs. Out-of-Network

Understanding in-network and out-of-network distinctions is crucial for optimizing healthcare coverage. In-network providers have agreements with insurance companies, offering discounted services and lower out-of-pocket costs. Out-of-network providers lack agreements, potentially leading to higher costs for the insured. Selecting the right network is essential for managing financial responsibilities and maximizing healthcare coverage.

