Four National Maternal and Child Health Organizations Announce Joint Action Plan for Anti-Racism and Racial Equity

May 25, 2021

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is uniting with three other national maternal and child health organizations in a bold, public commitment to undoing racism as a key driver to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, highlighting irrefutable disparities in morbidity and mortality rates across racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

By signing the Joint Organizational Commitment to Anti-Racism and Racial Equity, the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP), CityMatCH, the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA), and the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ) devote their combined organizational strength and influence to educate respective constituencies, jointly advocate for change, hold one another accountable, and create tangible steps to root out racism wherever it exists. The commitment was announced by video during the plenary session of AMCHP’s Annual Conference on May 25, 2021 – exactly one year since the appalling murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis.

“Our commitment to addressing racism as the root cause of inequity requires bold commitment and bold action,” said Caroline Stampfel, Interim CEO, AMCHP. “That we can take these steps in the context of this joint commitment means we stand in good company as we work to eliminate racial inequities in MCH outcomes”.

The driving purpose of this commitment is to act – Black/African American, Native American, and Latinx communities continue to experience health disparities caused by racism, despite an overflowing sea of well-intentioned statements. This joint organizational commitment is rooted in action and includes foundational principles that address the difference between racial equity and health equity and acknowledge the tremendous power and influence of public health institutions to disrupt structural inequities created by racism.

“It is imperative that MCH organizations and advocates take action against racism by participating in the advancement of racial equity at the local, state, and federal levels to eliminate
MCH health disparities,” said AMCHP Policy and Government Affairs Manager, Olivia Umoren.

**Organizational Commitments**

1. We commit to examining and improving our organizational internal processes.
2. We commit our organizations to influence and promote external work.
3. We commit our organizations to develop and release communications to support this work.

See the [full commitment document and video](#) for more information, including detailed action plans for each commitment area. Organizations will meet on a regular basis to share measured progress, including best practices related to actions taken and obstacles overcome, and assist each other with ways to address challenges.

Dr. Cheryl Clark, AMCHP Associate Director Equity, Epidemiology, & Evaluation says, “By striving to eliminate disparities in MCH outcomes, we will have impact on improving health and well-being throughout generations.”

### About the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs is a national resource, partner and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth, and families, including those with special health care needs. AMCHP’s members come from the highest levels of state government and include directors of maternal and child health programs, directors of programs for children with special health care needs and other public health leaders who work with and support state maternal and child health programs. Our members directly serve all women and children nationwide, and strive to improve the health of all women, infants, children, and adolescents, including those with special health care needs, by administering critical public health education and screening services, and coordinating preventive, primary and specialty care. Our membership also includes academic, advocacy and community-based family health professionals, as well as families themselves.

### About the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ)

NICHQ is a mission-driven nonprofit dedicated to driving dramatic and sustainable improvements in the complex issues facing children’s health. We build and manage effective change strategies with a commitment to racial equity and health equity, aligning partners and engaging stakeholders to achieve better outcomes for children and their families. For over 20 years, NICHQ has led more than 100 initiatives and reached millions of children and families. NICHQ’s unique approach to improving children’s health care systems gives more families access to care and coordinated services and helps all children achieve better outcomes. NICHQ is
deeply committed to health equity and ensuring all children reach their optimal health.

**About CityMatCH**
CityMatCH is a national membership organization of city and county health departments' maternal and child health (MCH) programs and leaders representing urban communities in the United States. CityMatCH's mission is to strengthen public health leaders and organizations to promote equity and improve the health of urban women, families, and communities. CityMatCH is grounded in the philosophy that all children and families deserve to be healthy and achieve their optimal growth and development in the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of their lives. The responsibility for assuring this is shared by each individual and his or her family, the community, and government at the federal, state, and local levels.

**About the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA)**
NHSA is committed to improving birth outcomes and health disparities that exist within communities of color throughout the United States. As the membership association for the federal Healthy Start programs, NHSA promotes the development of community-based and community-driven maternal and child health (MCH) programs, particularly those addressing the issues of maternal and infant mortality, low birth weight and racial disparities in perinatal outcomes. With over 100 Healthy Start projects situated across the United States, the Association works to expand the capacity of community-driven and community-based MCH programs and maternal and infant mortality preventive health services, thereby ensuring that all families have access to a continuum of affordable quality health care and related services. This range of care extends beyond the welfare of newborns and includes mothers, fathers, and families, thus affecting the entire community.

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