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State-Local Teams Chosen to Participate in Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality

A group of leading maternal and child health organizations announced the selection of six state-local collaborative teams to form a new partnership to improve the health of women and children and eliminate disparities in infant mortality.

“We are deeply concerned about the infant mortality rate in America, especially the shocking disparity between white and African Americans rates”, said Dr. Michael Fraser, CEO for the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs. “There are things we know we can do to improve birth outcomes in the clinical setting, but to fully impact infant mortality we have to get to the root causes of these disparities – social inequities based on race.”

The most recent data from the National Center for Health Statistics estimates an infant mortality rate of 6.71 per 1000 births in 2006. Alarmingly, the data also show that an African American infant living in the U.S. is still more than twice as likely to die in the first year of life as a white infant (13.33 vs. 5.58). Infant mortality rates measure the number of deaths of infants (one year of age or younger) per 1000 live births, and are considered a sentinel measure of how well a society is doing to assure the health of its women and children.

To address disparities in infant mortality, CityMatCH, the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), and the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) - with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation - have created the Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality. The purpose of this project is to eliminate racial inequities contributing to infant mortality within U.S. urban areas. The first activity of the partnership is an eighteen-month long Action Learning Collaborative (ALC). The following six teams were selected through a competitive process to participate in the ALC:

- Los Angeles, California
- Aurora, Colorado
- Pinellas County, Florida
- Chicago, Illinois
- Columbus, Ohio
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The emphasis of this team-based ALC is on innovative approaches to reducing racial inequities in infant mortality in urban communities, with particular attention paid to the impacts of racism. “Our work with the Kellogg Foundation, CityMatCH and the National Healthy Start Association to address racism as a root cause of health disparities, including disparities in infant mortality, is a major step to address the challenge of infant mortality and we expect it to lead to better birth outcomes for all women nationwide”, said Dr. Fraser.

• AMCHP •

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“This work is not only a longstanding priority for our agencies, but for our nation as a whole. We’re confident that the communities selected for this collaborative will advance innovative practice to eliminate disparities in health outcomes,” said Patrick Simpson, Executive Director of CityMat**CH**.

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About AMCHP

AMCHP represents state public health leaders promoting the health of America’s families through support for state maternal and child health programs, including service for children and youth with special health care needs.

About CityMat**CH**

CityMat**CH** is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of urban women, children, and families by strengthening the public health organizations and leaders who serve them.

About NHSA

The National Healthy Start Association works to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs, particularly those addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birthweight and racial disparities in perinatal outcomes.