

Best Practice Examples

Building a Comprehensive Initiative to Improve Birth Outcomes and Reduce Infant Mortality

In order to help stakeholders respond to growing awareness of the causes of high infant mortality and to new or renewed commitments to address poor birth outcomes, the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) developed a new resource on building comprehensive interventions within states and communities. *Forging a Comprehensive Initiative to Improve Birth Outcomes and Reduce Infant Mortality* was released in July 2012. This resource presents a framework for planning to improve birth outcomes and ultimately reduce infant mortality. Recommendations and strategic action steps from state and national reports on infant mortality were identified and summarized into seven broad recommendations. These seven broad recommendations are aligned with the Health Impact Pyramid, a framework for public health action developed by CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden in 2010.¹ This overarching framework gives stakeholders strategic direction on how to build comprehensive initiatives that address the multiple factors driving poor birth outcomes.

In order to help clarify the recommendations offered, examples of program and policy strategies are given for each of the seven recommendations. Examples were collected through multiple mechanisms, including best practices already included in the AMCHP Innovation Station; programs and policies highlighted at the AMCHP Annual Conference, through AMCHP webinars and other MCH forums; and through communication and solicitation from Title V directors. Some examples are grounded in evidence. Others may not have been extensively evaluated but show promising or emerging impact on improving birth outcomes.

This resource is intended as a review, not a prescription, of strategies states can consider throughout their efforts. AMCHP hopes this resource aids in focusing efforts to reduce infant mortality by providing specific, actionable ways to improve birth outcomes and facilitates learning about approaches from other states and communities.

Forging a Comprehensive Initiative to Improve Birth Outcomes and Reduce Infant Mortality is also available on the AMCHP website for free download along with additional AMCHP and partner resources on infant mortality. To access this resource, please visit: www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/womens-health/Focus%20Areas/improvingbirthoutcomes/infant-mortality/Pages/default.aspx.

To access the AMCHP best practices data base, Innovation Station, directly, please visit www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/

¹ Frieden TR. A framework for Public Health action: The Health Impact Pyramid. Am J Public Health. 2010; 100: 590-595. <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2009.185652>

