

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The Mississippi (MS) State Department of Health houses MCH programs that seek to help improve the health outcomes of women and infants residing in the state of Mississippi. Through collaboration and partnerships, the Mississippi State Department of Health initiatives address the disparities and inequities of the health outcomes.

## **ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS**

### **FETAL AND INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW**

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a baby before his or her first birthday and is considered an important indicator of the overall quality of health and health care of a population. Infant mortality is closely related to the social determinants of health (e.g. race, education, poverty). As a result of Mississippi's infant mortality rate, the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Program was implemented by the Mississippi State Department of Health in the Southern Region - Gulf Coast lower six counties (Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, George, Stone and Pearl River) in 2012. FIMR is a national program that is active in 28 states in the U.S.

The most recent United States Infant Mortality rate is 5.79 deaths per 1,000 live births. According to the 2019 MS Infant Mortality Report, the MS Infant Mortality rate decreased from 8.72 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 8.43 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018; however, last year the Mississippi Infant Mortality report (2013 – 2017) for four of the most populated counties in the gulf coast section of the southern region (Jackson, Harrison, Hancock & Pearl River) lists 6.68 deaths per 1,000 live births. Due to the continued decrease over the past eight years in infant mortality in these most populated four lower counties, we have expanded FIMR into the Hattiesburg area and are hoping for further expansion across the state through local partnerships with Healthy Start Programs.

### **THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MINORITY HEALTH**

In partnership with the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health implemented the Healthy Families Maternal and Child Health Program. The program utilizes community health workers to reduce maternal and child health disparities in Copiah, Hinds, Madison Rankin, Simpson counties in Mississippi. Community advocates work directly within the community to promote knowledge and awareness about maternal and child health, promote healthy behaviors and to identify barriers to accessing services.

The program has created a maternal and child health coalition to obtain feedback from the community. This coalition is composed of healthcare providers, social support service providers, educators, community advocates and other stakeholders dedicated to working together to improve the lives of children and women in the area. Over the last year, the Institute has developed a coalition of 13 organizations that have worked together to provide community education, link patients to healthcare services, provide peer support and resources to the community. The program provided community education to 1,155 individuals through a series of educational workshops. These training opportunities addressed postpartum depression, maternal mortality, child lead poisoning, and the impact of COVID-19 on the family.

Community outreach is another important aspect of the program. The program conducted four community baby showers to provide items, such as car seats, play pens, bottles, pacifiers, diapers, wipes, baby lotion, and health education to mothers and children. The events reached 1,030 individuals in the community. Initially, community outreach and education were conducted using traditional face-to-face methods. However, the program has adapted, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, and virtual technology is currently being used to maintain our connection to the community. Community events have been transformed into "drive-thru" no-contact events to ensure that mothers and children can still receive needed supplies and health education.

## COVID RELATED WORK

The Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health also works with community stakeholders to develop community-based solutions that are responsive to the community's emerging needs. In March 2020, the country experienced a nationwide shutdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. To respond to this urgent public health need, the program began to provide education to families in the area about COVID-19, risk factors, signs, and symptoms and how to prevent transmission. Leveraging existing community partnerships, the program began a campaign to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to families in the area. Since its inception, the program has provided 3,378 reusable masks; 500 disposable masks; 300 children's disposable masks; 240 rolls of paper towels; 74 rolls of toilet tissue; 17 packets of Kleenex; 15 goggles; 1,421 sanitizers. The PPE was provided to daycare centers, adult care centers, churches, schools, community health centers and barbershops.