SUMMARY STATEMENT

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. They are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Biases reside deep in the subconscious and cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. They are associative in nature and can be formed through repeated exposure or experiences. It's important to explore types of implicit biases, understand them, what effects they can cause, and how to address them.

Implicit bias impacts all aspects of our decision-making and thus is a contributing factor to health disparities. Health disparities are the differences in the incidence and prevalence of health conditions and health status between groups. Educating staff at the state and local level about implicit bias supports maternal, child, and family health practitioners in taking action to ensure equitable development and implementation of policies and programs that impact the women, children, and families served.

Ensuring programs are equitably designed and delivered by agency staff and subrecipients is paramount to ensuring equity in maternal and child health outcomes.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The first round of implicit bias trainings began with Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Maternal, Child and Family Health (BMCFH) program and policy staff on September 2019, and was followed by five subsequent trainings that were hosted in the five Ohio regions for BMCFH grantees. The trainings ended in January 2020 and served a total of 193 participants.

The second round of implicit bias trainings was hosted by the Ohio Department of Health Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review (PAMR) program. One training was held for Ohio Department of Health staff on May 12-13, 2020, followed by five virtual trainings for maternal healthcare providers on July 15, Aug. 5, Aug. 12, Sept. 1-2, and Sept. 15-16, 2020. These trainings served 208 participants total.

Among the 208 participants in the second round of trainings, 37% were registered nurses, 10% were social workers, and 5% were community health workers. The remaining participants ranged from lactation consultants, OB/GYN or family medicine providers, dieticians, certified midwives, and other public health employees (i.e., WIC, home visiting, OEI, etc.). The ODH PAMR program will continue to hold fifteen additional trainings between Oct. 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022. The next five trainings have been scheduled for Oct. 20, 2020, Dec. 2, 2020, Dec. 8, 2020, Jan. 12-13, 2021, and Feb. 9, 2021.