

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental (DHEC) continues to work with its partners to improve the health outcomes for women, children, and their families. In 2018, the prematurity rate was 11.3 and the infant mortality rate was 7.0 infants per 1000 live births. Health disparities continue to be an issue across both infant mortality and preterm birth and is closely tied to maternal risk factors. Multiple initiatives have been launched across the state to address maternal and child health outcomes and the inequities that exist among them.

## **ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS**

DHEC partners with several organization and agencies across the state to improve outcomes in perinatal and infant health. One of these partnerships is the South Carolina Birth Outcome Initiatives (BOI). South Carolina BOI brings together community partners to discuss issues that impact moms and babies across the state. Workgroups are multidisciplinary and include: Access to Care Coordination; Baby-Friendly/Safe Sleep; Behavioral Health; Data; Health Disparities; and Quality and Patient Safety.

South Carolina also continues to maintain a successful and robust perinatal regionalization system that ensures infants are born and cared for at the appropriate designated hospitals. As part of this effort, and our BOI partnership, DHEC has been involved with a vaginal birth simulation project, SIMCoach. This project helps women avoid C-sections that are not medically necessary and helps providers get the practice they need to help women during high-risk deliveries. Similarly, South Carolina launched its Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) program, increasing the adoption of safety bundles in birth facilities.

Other efforts to address infant birth outcomes includes expansion of Baby and Me tobacco free to address smoking cessation during pregnancy; expansion of the Perinatal/Infant Quality Improvement Expansion Grant to support oral health in pregnant women and infants; expansion of the Managing Abstinence in Newborns (MAIN) project to prevent the symptoms and complications of neonatal abstinence syndrome in otherwise healthy infants at birth; and nurse home visiting to women and infant before and after pregnancy. Through unified messaging, education and awareness, safe sleep continues to be a priority of DHEC.

## **COVID RELATED WORK**

To ensure the safety of all South Carolinians, especially those who are considered high risk, services for pregnant and postpartum women were transitioned to telehealth services. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen infrastructure and capacity in this area, including providing comprehensive data and programs.