COMMUNITY & FAITH ENGAGEMENT

ENHANCE AND/OR DEVELOP FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SYSTEMS THAT HAVE A BROAD IMPACT ON REDUCING INFANT MORTALITY

One of the most effective ways to eliminate health disparities and reduce infant mortality is to engage the community in developing strategies to address challenges that affect them.

Working with families, schools, policy makers and faith communities to become actively involved in identifying relevant issues, making decisions on what needs to be accomplished, and then implementing those changes, leads to success on every level.

RECOMMENDATION 1: FAITH-BASED
Engage the faith community to develop initiatives that address infant mortality
A. Develop a First Ladies’ Network
B. Fatherhood Initiative
C. Develop Safe Sleep materials for the Faith community

RECOMMENDATION 2: COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
Support Urban renewal in northeast Oklahoma City
A. Join and support Urban Renewal efforts in NE Oklahoma City
B. Address food and nutrition needs

RECOMMENDATION 3: GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION
Increasing health care benefits/eligibility to pregnant women

The Infant Mortality Alliance is a new collaborative of diverse partners that began as a task force working together to develop a strategic plan that will help reduce African American infant mortality rates in Oklahoma County. This Alliance will build upon its success, learn from its challenges, and develop new initiatives to ensure that more of our babies live to see their first birthday.
DID YOU KNOW?
The infant mortality rate (IMR), the number of infant deaths per 1000 live births, has continued to decline in the U.S. over the past several decades. However, despite this decline, improvements have not been equitable. The infant mortality rate for the African American population has not seen declines at the same rate as the Caucasian population. In Central Oklahoma the infant mortality rate among African American infants is more than double the rate of Caucasian infants. Despite our overall progress, the disparity persists.

BACKGROUND
In 2015, over 100 individuals, organizations, state agencies and stakeholders came together as a task force and developed a strategic plan based upon the research and best practice models from across the country. The task force built the plan based on the Life Course Theory that birth outcomes are determined by the entire life span of a woman, not just the nine months of pregnancy. Today, the task force has transitioned into the Infant Mortality Alliance and will begin implementation of the strategic plan with three primary goals in mind, including:

- Access to quality health care across the life span, including before, during and between pregnancies.
- Enhancing family and community systems that can have broad impacts on families and communities e.g., father involvement, integration of family support services, reproductive social capital, and community building.
- Addressing social, racial and economic inequities that impact health e.g., education, poverty, support for working mothers, racism.

HOW TO JOIN OUR EFFORTS
If you would like to join the Infant Mortality Alliance or the Community & Faith Engagement work group please contact Barbara Colbert at 405-425-4427 or barbara_colbert@occhd.org.

Rev. James Dorn, Alliance Chair
Kamisha Busby, Chair, Access to Health Care
Karen Jacobs, Chair, Community Engagement
Twyler Earl, Chair, Health Disparities