

## **Moms2B at OSU: A community based initiative focused on the social determinants of health has reduced infant mortality.**

### **The Ohio State University College of Medicine**

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Infant mortality rates (IMR) directly reflect the health of a population. Measured as the death of a live born infant in the first year of life, per 1000 live births, the IMR also reflects the health of neighborhoods and subpopulations. To address the high rates of infant mortality and Black-White disparities in Columbus, Ohio, we began an academic-neighborhood based group program to learn from pregnant women living in an impoverished, predominantly Black urban neighborhood. With grant funding, we learned firsthand how social determinants, e.g. evictions, crime, transportation and stress resulted in the high rates of infant deaths.

We responded to the shocking number of social stressors by developing a multidisciplinary education and case management program, named Moms2B. In 2017 we published the outcomes of our interventions in the two census tracts encompassing the neighborhood. We documented the decline in infant mortality from 14.2 per 1000 live births to 2.9. From one neighborhood, we expanded to seven more high risk areas where half the infant deaths in Columbus occur. Over 120 pregnant and postpartum women attend the weekly two hour, group sessions. To date, we have enrolled almost 3000 pregnant women and introduced a Dads2B program. We have documented improved outcomes from these pregnancies and a 55% reduction in infant deaths.

Challenges: With little warning, COVID-19 closed our popular in-person weekly sessions. Immediately, we changed to a virtual platform. At first through Facebook live, maintaining telephone, text and e-mail contact, then through Ohio State Carmen-Zoom sessions. We continue to receive referrals and enroll virtually. Before COVID-19, families picked-up food and essential supplies in person at the weekly sessions. During the pandemic, pick-ups occur at designated food pantries.

Underway: Transitioning from documenting in a REDCap case management system into the Electronic Medical Record in the OSU Medical System.