

Local Health Departments in Action

Maternal Health Disparities

Maternal Disparities Leadership Summit

- **PURPOSE:** Explore the persistent and alarming disparities in maternal health in Texas, New Orleans, and Memphis
- **Goals:**
 - Determine the most salient issues driving local maternal disparities.
 - Create an opportunity for local health departments to share promising and innovative practices in examining data, policy, and community engagement.
 - Identify collaborative opportunities among agencies to improve maternal health outcomes.



Public Health
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Maternal Health Disparities

- Contributing factors: racial disparities (highest among non-Hispanic Black), low wealth, geographic location, and access to care by coverage or availability of health care providers.
- Delays in starting prenatal care which leads to poorer health outcomes: the Texas State Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) found that 70% of maternal deaths occurred in women insured by Medicaid at the time of delivery and that 80% of all maternal deaths were preventable (Chinn et al. 2020).
- Delays in care impact outcomes: Price (2022) noted that the application process for Medicaid may take over 30 days, contributing to the late initiation of care (Price 2022). Medicaid was expanded throughout the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) to assure care for those with limited access. The ad hoc expansion of Medicaid provided continuous coverage for millions of Texans ended in March of 2023.

Three discussion topics

Data

- Challenges related to data collection, analysis, and availability of local health data related to maternal morbidity and mortality.

Policy

- Complicated application policies for state and federal programs which led to delayed care, as well as the non-medical drivers of health (NMDOH), such as lack of housing, food insecurity, and transportation.

Role of community partners

- Need to partner with community-based organizations that could support the efforts of local health departments and provide resources to address the NMDOH.

Collaboration Opportunities

Data

- Develop a collaborative needs assessment to identify common challenges across jurisdictions.
- Ensure that the NMDOH are included in the Health Information Exchanges data collection methods.
- Establish a coordinated effort to identify common data elements across jurisdictions for maternal morbidity & mortality (e.g., syndromic surveillance).

Policies

- Remove barriers to medical and behavioral care for women of childbearing age, mothers, and children.
- Create a more integrated and seamless connection between healthcare and public health services.
- Provide reimbursement for public health departments as a payor type for navigation services/care coordination and clinical services.

Community Partnerships

- Ensure stakeholder collaboration with the community.
- Continue to advocate for state and federal-level resources.
- Expand partnerships to develop a Continuum of Care model to help mothers and children.

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