CASE STUDY: Improving infant mortality rates for African-American families

Henry Ford Health System, Detroit Medical Center, Beaumont-Dearborn Healthcare System, St. John Providence Health System | Detroit

PROGRAM: Women Inspired Neighborhood Network

Detroit's infant mortality rate has been among the highest in the nation for years. In 2008, area hospitals and health systems joined together commissioning the Detroit Regional Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force to develop an action plan to help more babies celebrate their first birthdays. The result was the Women-Inspired Neighborhood (WIN) Network, originally named Sew Up the Safety Net for Women & Children

Empowering community health

The WIN network empowers mothers and their support partners (significant others, grandparents, sisters and friends) to help babies thrive beyond first birthdays. Using innovative strategies, community health workers (CHWs) guide new and expecting mothers through a safety net of social, emotional and clinical supports. In groups clustered by gestational age, participants learn the CenteringPregnancy® curriculum with an added focus on social determinants of health. CHWs conduct home visits through babies' first birthdays and continuously guide women to resources. The program also supports non-pregnant women in their communities and online. As the nation's first program to pilot an enhanced model of group prenatal care with CHWs and Certified Nurse Midwivers, to date, the WIN program has:

- Served 364 African-American women between the ages of 18-34, having zero preventable infant deaths and better-than-average rates of pre-term and low-birthweight deliveries.

- Helped over 1,000 non-pregnant women improve knowledge around infant mortality, health literacy, healthy living and family planning.

- Provided training to over 500 providers and health professionals through WIN's CME-approved "Sew Up the Safety Net for Women & Children" health care equity training.

Promoting equity and cultural competency in health care

As part of the Detroit Regional Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force, WIN is a learning collaborative. With formal health care equity training at the foundation, data and participant stories are discussed regularly at quarterly meetings and during other outlets. CHWs inspire understanding between patients and providers by helping women improve their health literacy and consumption.

Learn more about the WIN Network's notable accomplishments at www.WinNetworkDetroit.org.

Find more case studies and share your organization's efforts to ensure every person in every community receives high-quality, equitable and safe care.
Visit www.diversityconnection.org.