



MONTCO MAMAS: Putting Data into Action to Reduce Black Infant Mortality

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Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) Report

Executive Summary

Improving birth outcomes for Black women in Montgomery County, PA

Knowing that racial disparities exist for birth outcomes, the Montgomery Early Childhood Consortium PPOR subcommittee analyzed all birth and death records for women living in the county. The survival of babies of Black women (n=4,482) was compared to babies of White women (n=31,496), who had better outcomes.

In Montgomery County, babies of Black/African-American women are **2.6 times** as likely to die as babies of White women.¹

We categorized each death by birthweight and age at death, and found that **the greatest racial disparity is among very low birthweight babies** (less than 3.3 pounds).²

To reduce the racial inequity, we need to increase babies of Black women born at healthy weights.

This is inequity. We can intervene.

To learn more about what could help Black/African-American women in Montgomery County have healthy babies, we held three community focus groups. Analysis of the birth and death records as well as content of the focus groups revealed **key action areas**:

- **Nutrition and weight**
- **Health across the life course**
- **Interactions with healthcare providers**
- **Emotional and mental health support**
- **Informal and formal education**
- **Access to services**



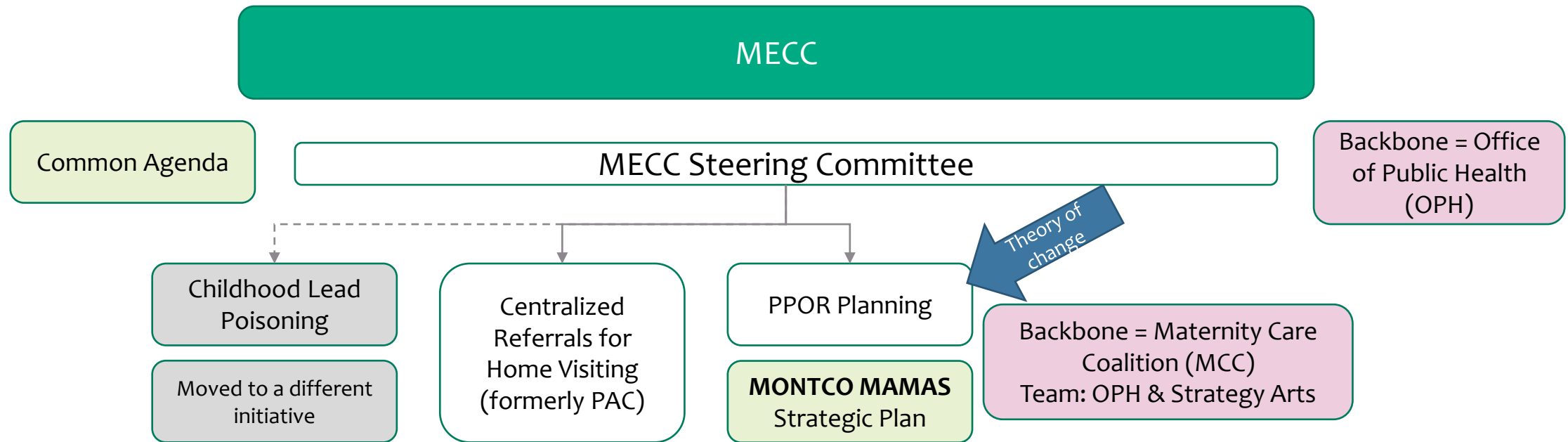
By focusing on these areas, we can reduce the number of very low birthweight babies of Black/African-American women. This will lessen the racial gap in fetal and infant survival.

Montgomery County PPOR Subcommittee 2020

For more information about this effort and our process so far: montcopa.org/3256/Get-Involved-Disparities-In-Infant-Health

1. 20.3 fetal and deaths per 1,000 births for babies of Black women compared to 7.9 deaths per 1,000 births for babies of White women
2. Comparing 1) very low birthweight deaths to low and normal weight 2) fetal deaths, 3) newborn deaths, and 4) infant deaths

MontCo Mamas and the Maternal and Early Childhood Consortium “MECC”



MontCo Mamas: Hope for All, Life for All

Our vision

A Montgomery County where each child born brings hope for our future and where all African American/Black women receive the resources, opportunities, and support needed to have healthy pregnancies and to welcome thriving children in the world.

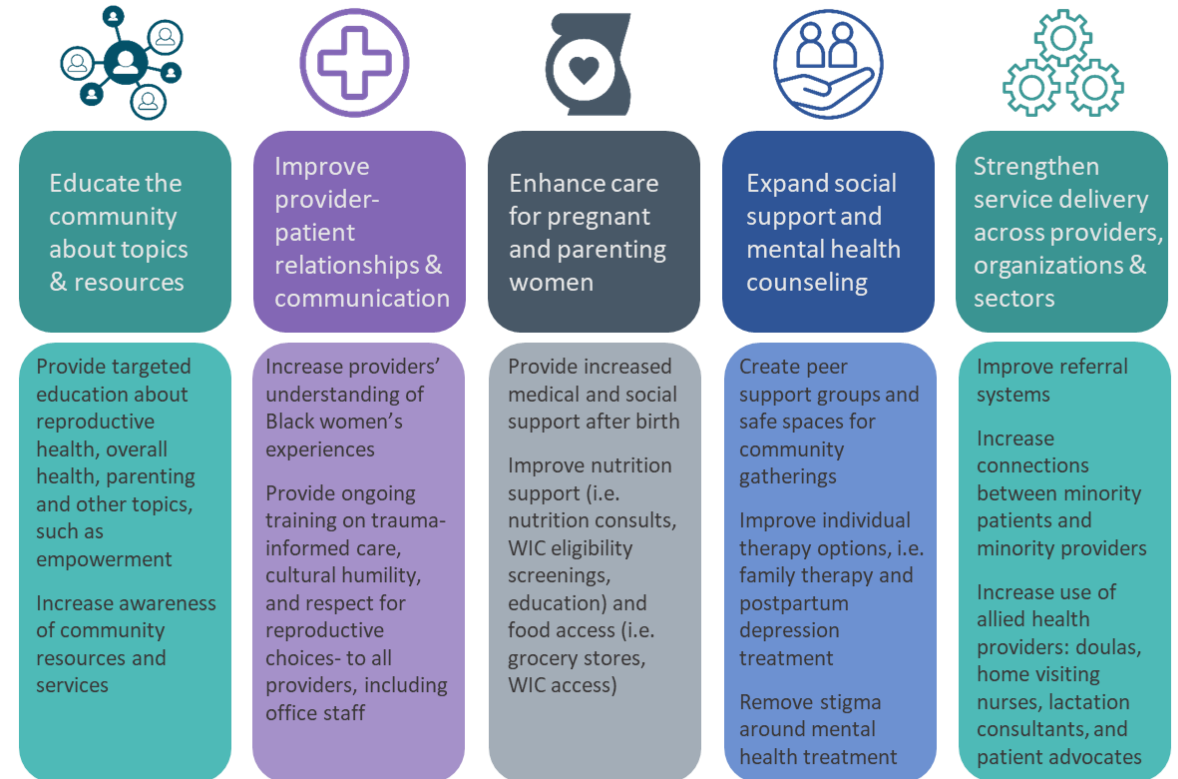
Our mission

To remove inequities surrounding race and infant mortality to support healthy births for Black women in Montgomery County

Our principles

- The voice of the community is an equal partner
- Racial inequities are not caused by individual behaviors
- Racial biases in healthcare exist and must be addressed
- Cultural humility and trauma-informed practices are necessities
- All women deserve a safe and healthy pregnancy
- Resources must be physically, financially and culturally accessible to families

Our strategic plan

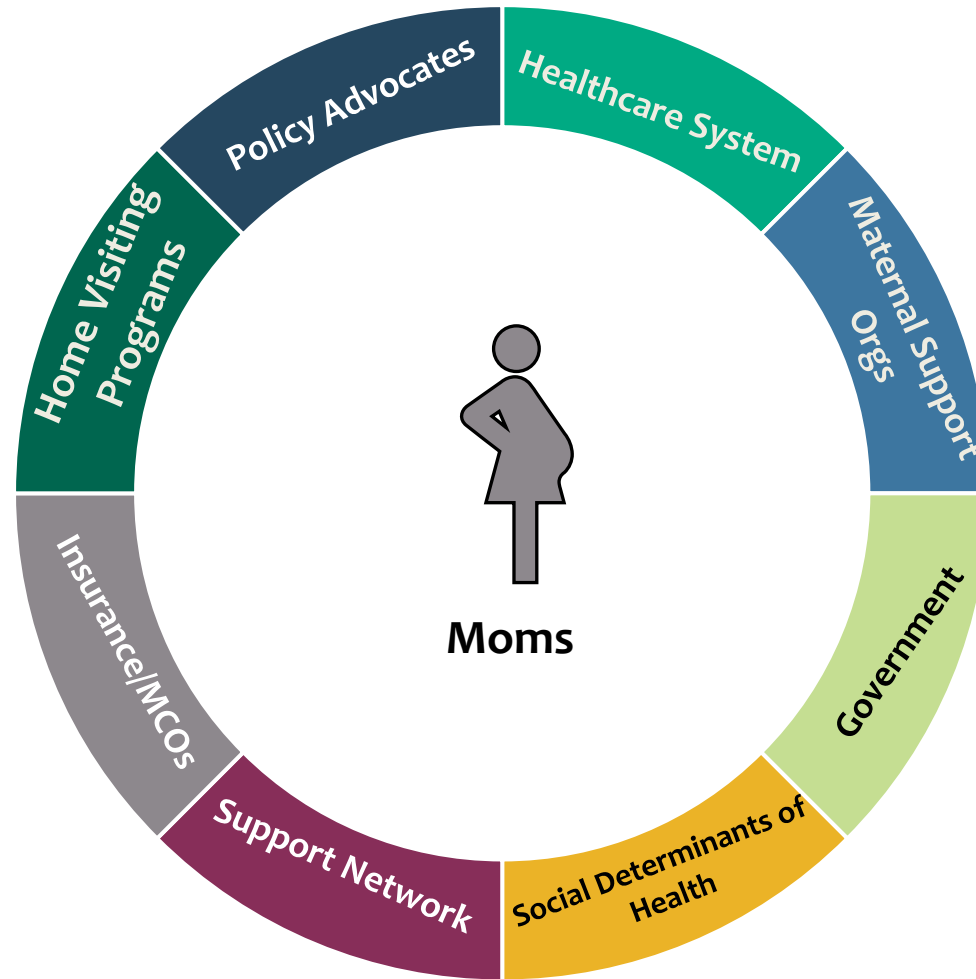


Background: In Montgomery County, Black/African American women are 2.6 times more likely to have a fetal or infant death compared to White women. This strategic plan was developed in response to a study of racial inequities in local birth outcomes and was created with community residents and stakeholders.

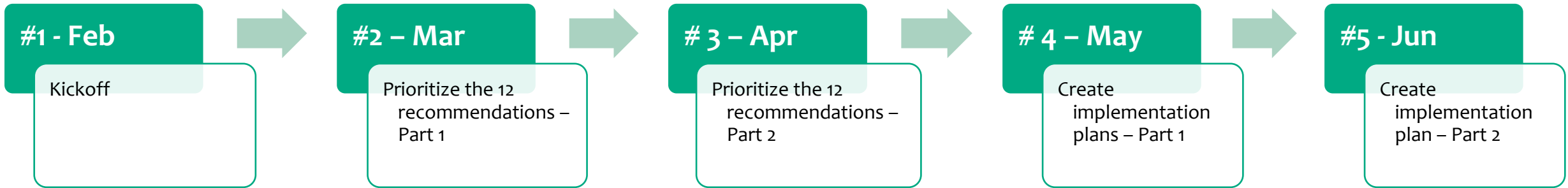
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Last Updated: 2.24.20

MontCo Mamas Sectors



Planning Team Process



Discussion Format

Survey Questions

- Which recommendations will advance MontCo Mama's goal the most powerfully?
- Which recommendations, if we implemented first, would enable other recommendations to happen more powerfully or easily?
- Which recommendations generate broad community energy, enthusiasm, and leadership?

Breakout groups

- ✓ What ideas do you have for approaches to doing this?
 - Short term
 - Long term
- ✓ Who would be potential partners in this initiative?

Recommendation: Increase use of allied health providers: doulas, home visitors, lactation consultants and patient advocates

Major Activities: Short-term

1. Create registry of allied health providers
2. Expand referral system
3. Increase awareness: create and implement distribution plan
 - Community settings
 - Provider offices/hospitals
 - High school & colleges

Major Activities: Long-term

1. Secure funding
2. Advocate for insurance coverage
3. Develop data system
4. Evaluate capacity to identify gaps
5. Address capacity gap
6. Encourage standards of practice

Outcomes

1. Families seek out referral system to connect with allied health providers
2. Referral system users return
3. Positive experiences with allied health providers
4. Data shows an increase in use of allied health providers
5. Every pregnant birthing person/parent is offered allied health provider services

Recommendation: Provide targeted education about reproductive health, overall health, parenting and other topics such as empowerment

Major Activities: Short-term

1. Determine methods of educating community members (including peer groups)
2. Develop content that builds on their current knowledge

Major Activities: Long-term

1. Develop comprehensive plan for county-wide sustainable education
2. Design a MontCo Mamas website
3. Create educational standards

Outcomes

1. Multiple channels for receiving education
2. Materials/messaging includes culturally aligned definitions for successful pregnancies
3. MontCo Mamas has strong collaboration with providers and hospitals
4. Comprehensive education plan that reaches all Black communities in MontCo

Recommendation: Increase provider's understanding of Black women's experiences

Major Activities: Short-term

1. Provide onsite training
2. Incorporate personal stories
3. Continue doctor/doula dialogues

Major Activities: Long-term

1. Incorporate into new hire training
2. Target Emergency Department staff
3. Provider partners with social workers
4. Introduce this training in medical school

Outcomes

1. Black women and Black birthing people report they received respectful care
2. Providers treat Black women and Black birthing people's pain the same as white women and white birthing people
3. System changes in the health systems identified and implemented
4. Providers and hospitals have ongoing training

Highlights

Collaborations

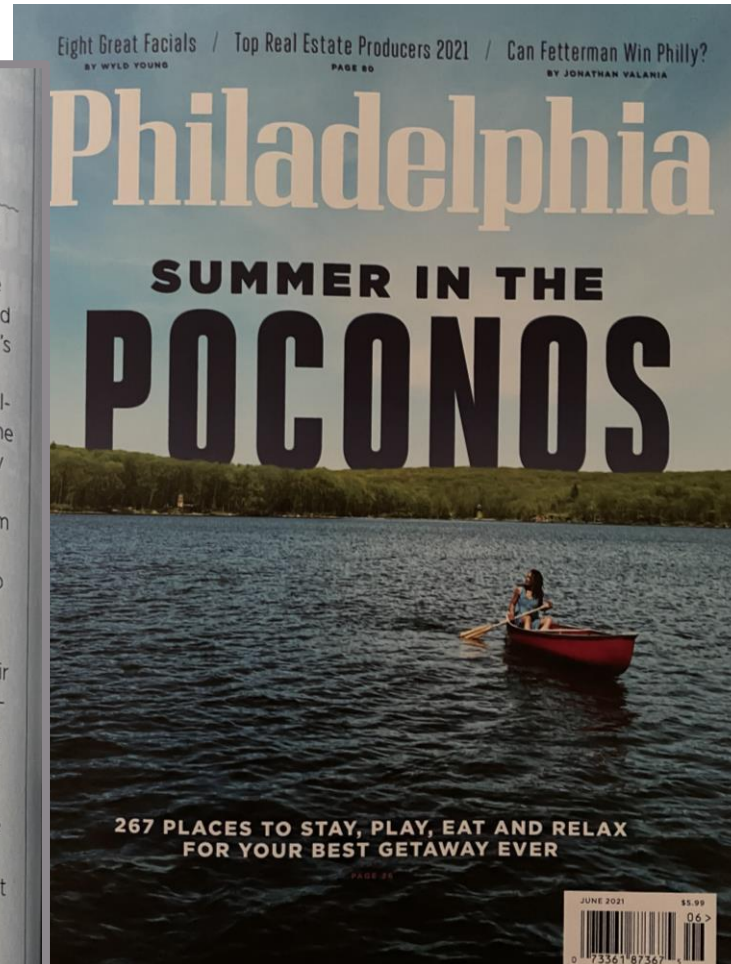
- ✓ Lived Experience Expert Chat and Chew
- ✓ Legislator engagement
- ✓ Learning Community panelists
- ✓ Jefferson MPH student internship

Media

- ✓ HealthSpark feature article
- ✓ Phila Magazine: online article
- ✓ Fox 29 TV interview
- ✓ Phila Magazine: June issue

Family Matters

Disparities in infant mortality for Black women's babies are well documented, and Montgomery County's Montco Mamas is fighting back. This collaboration between the Montgomery County Maternal and Early Childhood Consortium and Maternity Care Coalition is looking to improve the health and well-being of Black women and their offspring by researching the causes of the disparities and seeking solutions. "Birth outcomes are not the mother's fault," says Montco Mamas project lead Toscha Blalock. "They are the direct result of inequitable social determinants of health, including environment, education, income, and quality of health services. When racist practices and policies exist within those areas, the result is going to be disparity."



Thank you!

