

Prince George's Healthcare Action Coalition Infant Mortality Work Group



Meets once each month by conference call

Co-Chair is Marie Pokraka (Maryland National Capital Area Chapter Director, March of Dimes)

The Infant Mortality Work Group (IMWG) operates under Priority 3 of the Local Health Action Plan for 2011-2014 in Prince George's County, to *“improve reproductive healthcare and birth outcomes for women in Prince George's County, particularly among African American women.”* As such, the Work Group has selected the following County Outcome Objectives to work towards achieving each year:

- (1) Reduce infant deaths by five percent (5%)
- (2) Reduce low birth weights (LBW) and very low birth weights by five percent (5%)
- (3) Increase the proportion of pregnant women who receive prenatal care beginning in the first trimester by five percent (5%)

The work group's primary strategy for 2014 from the Local Health Action Plan, 2011-2014 is to *“provide information to pregnant women and women of childbearing age (including women with health insurance and higher incomes) about the risk factors that affect birth outcomes, especially focusing on African American women.”*

The Infant Mortality Work Group's 2014 goals are:

- (1) Produce a Monthly Scorecard for Up-to-Date Data Analysis
- (2) Plan a Health Symposium for early 2015
- (3) Implement the Community Health Worker Project
- (4) Reprint and Redistribute Pregnancy Help Cards in English and Spanish

Recently, the Group received approval from Prince George's County Health Department (PGCHD) to reprint the pregnancy cards that were developed and originally distributed in 2013. The Work Group is working with Diane Young, Division Manager of Family Health Services at PGCHD, to possibly use grant funding for the printing expenses. Currently, the IMWG has over 100 distribution points throughout the county, such as beauty shops, drug stores, healthcare facilities and community centers.

The Community Health Worker Project is moving ahead since its inception in 2013. Now, three (3) community health workers have been hired through a grant administered to PGCHD. And four to five (4-5) volunteers have been recruited to work in the program. The CHW's and volunteers will be helping to connect women and pregnant women to healthcare and prevent diabetes and other prenatal health complications in Prince George's County.

The Work Group is working with Prince George's County Epidemiologist Donna Perkins to produce a monthly scorecard on infant mortality rates and related data in Prince George's County. The scorecards will include monthly accounts of the number of low birth weights, high risk births, gestational age of infants, access to prenatal care, and demographic information on new mothers each month.

Finally, the Infant Mortality Work Group has begun planning a countywide symposium on Health Disparities in Prince George's County that will take place in March 2015. The Infant Mortality group already is collaborating with the other five work groups in order to identify various issues for discussion and education, keynote speakers, meeting logistics and other resources. The Work Group has currently arranged itself into subcommittees in order to involve members in various aspects of planning.

Prepared by Erin Diamond, Program Coordinator PGHAC