A new approach to reduce infant mortality and achieve equity

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Vision
To influence the improvement of health and well-being for all Ohioans.

Mission
To provide the independent and nonpartisan analysis needed to create evidence-informed state health policy.

Tactics
Written and online products
Education
Convening
Technical assistance
Objectives

• Introduce report
• Discuss key findings
• Review policy goals and recommendations
• Provide actionable next steps
“The Commission recognized that improving the social determinants of health is critical to improving birth outcomes but did not have enough time to delve into these multi-system issues.”

- Ohio Commission in Infant Mortality, March 2016

SB 332 requirements

1. Review of policies and programs: housing, transportation, education, employment
2. Identify opportunities to improve policies and programs
3. Study impact of state-funded rental assistance program
4. Evaluate best practices from other states
5. Make policy recommendations

Sources of information

Most improved state research
- State-level trend data analysis to identify most improved states, including most improved for black infant mortality
- Literature review, document review, and key informant interviews to identify how other states improved

Health Vitals Dashboard data
- Analysis to identify strongest drivers of infant mortality from social, economic, and physical environment

Literature review and environmental scan
- Narrative research literature
- Focus on housing, transportation, employment, and education
- Describe existing programs and policies in other states

Inventory of evidence-informed SDOH strategies
- Systematic reviews, evidence registries and expert consensus reports
- Examples from other states
1. Troubling trends
2. Troubling disparities
3. Access to care is necessary, but not sufficient
4. Community conditions are challenging for risk groups
5. Policymakers have many options
Key themes for improving community conditions

- Prioritize housing and employment
- Connect the disconnected
- Ensure all children have the opportunity to thrive
- Acknowledge and address the roles of racism, discrimination, violence and toxic stress
- Innovate, leverage public-private partnerships and join forces across sectors
- Coordinate, collaborate, monitor and evaluate
- Balance short-term fixes with longer-term change

Housing policy goals

**Goal 1** Increase the availability of rental assistance programs for renters with Extremely Low Incomes

**Goal 2** Reduce structural barriers to accessing affordable housing for the highest-risk renters (structural barriers include level of income, source of incomes, criminal record, etc.)

**Goal 3** Increase the supply of affordable rental housing for Extremely Low Income and Very Low Income households in high opportunity and low poverty areas

**Goal 4** Improve coordination of services for low-income families by convening cross-sector partnerships
**Housing policy goals**

**Goal 5)** Increase the supply of affordable housing for renters with Extremely Low Incomes

**Goal 6)** Reduce the number of evictions and forced moves experienced by low-income families most at risk of infant mortality, including African Americans and pregnant women

**Goal 7)** Improve the quality of affordable housing stock

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**Policy recommendation development**

Evidence-based policy or program + Specific policy lever = Policy recommendation
**Recommendation examples:**
**Rental assistance**

**Recommendation 1.1.** Fund Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to establish state-funded rental assistance targeted to reduce infant mortality

**Recommendation 1.2.** Increase funding for rapid rehousing and rental assistance through:
- Increased county recordation fees to Ohio Housing Trust Fund
- Increased funding from Ohio Development Services Agency
- Amending state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families spending plan

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**Recommendation examples:**
**Reduce barriers to rental housing**

**Recommendation 2.1.** Pass legislation to reduce or eliminate barriers, including:
- Discrimination based on source of income
- Criminal history
- Delay use of criminal background checks

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**Recommendation examples:**
**Convene cross-sector partnerships**

**Recommendation 2.1.** Convene relevant state agency with Medicaid managed care plans, Ohio Equity Institute partners and Continuums of Care to discuss ways that Medicaid managed care plans can support housing stability among Medicaid enrollees most at risk for infant mortality, including people with low incomes and low levels of educational attainment, African Americans and residents of infant mortality hot spot zip code areas or neighborhoods.
How local communities can use the recommendations

Which topic(s) have the most unmet need for infant mortality priority populations in your community?

Select small number of goals within relevant topic(s)

- Select relevant state-level recommendations and partner with others to advocate for them
- Select relevant local-level recommendations and partner with others to enact and implement

Partnering with local efforts to reduce infant mortality

- Infant mortality collaborative groups (e.g. CelebrateOne)
- Ohio Equity Institute teams (link to contact information)
- Pathways Community Hub models
- Local and regional health systems
- Local health departments
- Community health needs assessments and plans

Questions

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