Beginning with prenatal care through an infant’s second year of life, the Cleveland MomsFirst project is designed to improve birth outcomes and ensure a healthy start for babies by providing support to high-risk pregnant women and teens. Core services include outreach, case management, health education, and interconception care. The project also provides screening and referral for perinatal and postpartum depression, substance/alcohol abuse, toxic stress, and intimate partner violence.

The goal of MomsFirst is to reduce disparities in infant mortality. The participants are primarily high-risk African American pregnant women and teens. Cleveland’s 2012 overall infant mortality rate (IMR) was 12.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births with a white IMR of 11.8 and a black IMR of 15.7. MomsFirst’s IMR for participants in 2012 was 6.2, 2013 was 5.6, and 2014 was 5.9. Given that MomsFirst participants are reflective of those women at the highest risk for poor birth outcomes, this data provide strong evidence of a successful program to reduce infant mortality.

• All MomsFirst sites hold neighborhood consortia meetings to educate the community at large about the following topics: preterm labor, safe sleep, smoking cessation, substance abuse, family planning, STD/HIV/AIDS prevention and testing, intimate partner violence, and perinatal depression.

• MomsFirst continues to distribute the Baby Basics health literacy curriculum to all mothers enrolled in the project. Baby Basics is a prenatal health guide based on the bestselling book What to Expect When You’re Expecting. The book provides interactive, culturally sensitive prenatal education for expecting moms and also addresses and supports their need for literacy training and education.

• MomsFirst hosted a “Baby Buggy Walk in the Park” in recognition and support of Infant Mortality Awareness Month. This event was successful in reaching expectant mothers, fathers, new parents, grandparents, and caregivers with interactive educational activities and exhibits promoting safe sleep practices, eating healthy on a budget, and physical fitness. Other vendors for community resource information included prenatal care, WIC services, Boot Camp for Dads, breastfeeding, and foodbank services.

• The women served by MomsFirst are at an elevated risk for depression due to both pregnancy and socioeconomic factors. Depression can affect a pregnant woman’s functional status and her ability to obtain prenatal care, eat properly, and avoid dangerous behaviors. Untreated depression during pregnancy is associated with spontaneous abortion, preterm delivery, and other adverse effects. The Cleveland Regional Perinatal Network developed a systemwide approach to screen and refer women identified at risk for perinatal depression by establishing universal screening and referral protocols at several health care institutions and community agencies. As a result of these protocols, there has been a significant rise in referrals to perinatal mental health providers.

• The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. The Ohio campaign focus is to reduce disparities in preterm birth rates, improve the health of women before and between pregnancies, advance perinatal quality improvement, and expand preterm birth research. Additionally, March of Dimes grants are awarded to programs and research that focus on this mission.

  • In 2015, the Ohio March of Dimes provided funds to enhance mental health services for pregnant women in the CenteringPregnancy® programs at University MacDonald Women’s Hospital.
  • In 2015, the March of Dimes provided research funding to Case Western Reserve University, MetroHealth Medical Center, and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

• MetroHealth Medical Center offers a high-risk prematurity clinic to help parents of fragile preterm babies avoid sleep related deaths, optimize infant development, and develop positive parenting and feeding skills.

• Invest In Children works to ensure a comprehensive early childhood system for families with young children by funding organizations that work with pregnant parents to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality. They also provide newborn visits to low income families. Messages for parents are woven throughout all of their programs including information about prenatal and interconception health, safe sleep, and environmental tobacco smoke.
Prematurity and Infant Mortality (cont.)

- The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) provides training sessions for MomsFirst staff members and educational classes for MomsFirst clients on the topics of infant mortality, preterm labor, prematurity, and safe sleep.

- The CCBH also has representation on the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality. Its mission is to prevent infant mortality and improve the health of women and children throughout Ohio with the use of evidence-based approaches and education.

- CCBH has also partnered with the Cleveland Department of Public Health, the Ohio Department of Health, and CityMatCH to become members of the Ohio Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes (OEI). This three-year initiative is exploring public health strategies to eliminate health inequities in birth outcomes and improve local and state infant mortality rates. The Cuyahoga County OEI team has selected strategies that include expanding CenteringPregnancy® as the downstream approach and decreasing unplanned pregnancies through awareness and utilization of family planning as the upstream approach. In June 2015, OEI organized a community event “One Life, One Voice, One Community: every baby deserves a 1st birthday” to raise awareness of infant mortality.

- The Division of Children and Family Services maintains its Sobriety, Treatment, and Recovery Team (START) department which focuses on children born exposed to or addicted to drugs or alcohol. The staff has additional training and expertise in the area of chemical dependency and addiction to provide these families with support and assistance.

- CCBH provides presentations about health, equity, and infant mortality to the staff at hospitals in Cuyahoga County.

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Sleep Related Deaths

- In 2014-2015, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH), as outreach for the Child Fatality Review Board, continued to provide safe sleep education for the medical and nursing staff at maternity and pediatric hospitals throughout the county.

- CCBH became a “Safe to Sleep Champion®” by completing the training and educational outreach activities that were required by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

- CCBH has been an active member of the statewide Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership’s safe sleep subcommittee, which was responsible for the development of the Ohio safe sleep campaign that was introduced in May 2014.

- The “safe sleep cards” with the A, B, C safe sleep message, local data about sleep related deaths, and a picture of a safe sleep environment continue to be circulated throughout Cuyahoga County. Over 10,000 cards have been distributed to hospitals, home visiting programs, community recreation centers, neighborhood clinics, churches, and family serving agencies.

- CCBH continues to participate in maternity licensure visits at local birthing hospitals. Areas of discussion include the number of sleep related deaths in the county, the importance of role modeling safe sleep in the hospital, and incorporating a discussion of safe sleep with parents and family members before discharge. A tour of the nursery and patients’ rooms also provides opportunities for education.

- CCBH also provided safe sleep presentations to foster parents and members of the Fatherhood Initiative.

- The WIC Program continues to provide safe sleep information to their clients during visits.

- The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) implemented a procedure to ensure that all DCFS-involved families with children under the age of one receive a safe sleep presentation from their DCFS worker. Pack-n-plays were also distributed to families identified as being in need of a safe sleep environment.
Sleep Related Deaths (cont.)

- In response to the number of sleep related deaths in Greater Cleveland, the Rainbow Injury Prevention Center designed a safe sleep postcard that is given to new parents at MacDonald Women’s Hospital as a part of the hospital’s child safety rounding project. During 2014, the staff visited over 2,800 new mothers.

- MomsFirst provides safe sleep education to all participants in the program with over 2,000 families served in 2014. The project continues to assist families in need of a safe sleep environment in obtaining a pack-n-play.

- In 2015, MomsFirst’s partnered with the CCBH to host three interactive safe sleep baby showers in neighborhoods with the highest infant mortality rates. The 200 community members at the events were educated about how to safely place a baby to sleep.

- MomsFirst distributed safe sleep materials to senior adults through the City of Cleveland Department of Aging and safe sleep posters and materials were distributed through the Cleveland Public Library system.

- Safe sleep fliers continue to be included with birth certificates mailed to parents.

- The nurses from the CCBH Welcome Home Newborn Visiting program discuss safe sleep and how to calm a crying baby during their visits with families. From 2014-2015, there were 1,997 newborn visits completed.

- Help Me Grow staff provides safe sleep education and materials to their clients.

Unintentional Injuries

- The Rainbow Injury Prevention Center is dedicated to preventing unintentional injuries. The Center’s mission is threefold 1) to work directly with children and families through education and outreach to decrease injury risk and improve well-being 2) to share creative ideas, resources, and information with all members of the Greater Cleveland community and 3) to advance the body of knowledge in unintentional injury prevention research.

- As Greater Cleveland’s child passenger safety experts, the staff operates free Car Seat Inspection Stations; provides low-cost car seat distribution for income-qualified families; offers infant car seat consultations for expectant parents; develops educational campaigns such as “Face the Facts/ Face the Back” to keep children rear facing until at least 2 years of age; conducts free car seat checkup events; leads booster seat promotion efforts; and designs seat belt promotion campaigns aimed at tweens and teens.

- The Center promoted child pedestrian safety by coordinating the International Walk to School Day activities in 21 local schools for more than 6,700 students.

- The teen seat belt program includes, “The Science of Attention,” which focuses on the dangers of distracted driving, “Seat Belt Survivor,” and “Click it for a Ticket” to encourage safe driving and seat belt use. These programs reached over 2,500 students.

- The Center launched the Rainbow Safety Squad to bring health and safety messages to elementary students by engaging the children in multimedia activities. The topics include bicycle, water and sports safety, motor vehicle crash physics, and physical activity.

- In 2014, the staff visited over 2,800 new mothers at MacDonald Women’s Hospital to provide safety information about car seats and childproofing the home.

- The Rainbow Injury Prevention Center also uses Facebook and Twitter to spread safety messages to a wide audience.
Homicide

- The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) incorporates the Family to Family Four Core Principles into their practice model 1) A child's safety is paramount 2) Children belong in families 3) Families need the support of strong communities and 4) Public child-welfare systems must partner with the broader community to achieve strong, positive outcomes for children.

- DCFS currently contracts with 14 neighborhood collaborative sites. These partnerships play a vital role in prevention efforts that allow children and families to be served safely in their home.

- The Special Investigation Unit at the DCFS, in conjunction with the Practice Evaluation Unit, continues to perform a comprehensive record review for all fatalities in which the deceased child was involved with the agency at the time of the fatality and/or during the previous 12 months. Lessons learned from investigations contribute to ongoing staff development throughout the agency, particularly in the areas of safety planning and prevention.

- DCFS continues to contract with three evidence-based parenting programs. Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidence-based parent training intervention that teaches caregivers of children ages 2-7 years specific behavior management techniques as they play with their child. PCIT focuses on improving the caregiver-child relationship and increasing children's positive behaviors. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an evidence-based child-and-parent-focused therapy designed to help children and adolescents ages 3-17 years face and overcome the effects of trauma, and to engage the parent/caregiver as an effective support and partner in their child's recovery. Alternatives for Families-Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) is an in-home/outpatient-based therapy used to treat trauma in families with physically coercive/abusive parents and their children ages 5-18 years. This program is designed for physically abused children who present behavior and adjustment problems, poor social competence, and deficits in relationship skills.

- DCFS has added a program to provide Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) to families with at-risk teens. MST services provide intensive, in-home therapy-based services to the family for up to six months.

- The Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care has expanded and serves more families with at-risk youth. Tapestry uses wraparound services to meet a family's needs. The focus is on building a team of natural and formal supports in the community to “wrap around” the family and develop a plan of care.

- DCFS has developed a Multi-System Kids (MSK) unit to focus on youth who are involved in multiple county systems.

- The Medical Investigations Unit at the DCFS serves families with medically fragile children or children who have suffered severe abuse. The workers in this unit have advanced training and experience with complicated medical issues and have developed relationships with the medical providers. This enables them to ensure that the children's needs are being met. The unit has re-educated the staff on chronic health issues such as asthma and diabetes.

- DCFS is implementing trauma-focused interventions in partnership with the county's Defending Childhood Initiative. DCFS uses a trauma screening tool for every child who is the subject of an investigation to identify children in need of trauma-informed services. Through clinical consultations, this has assisted the staff to find and implement the most effective services for families.

- The Cuyahoga County Witness/Victim Service Center (WVSC) is an official site of the US Department of Justice's Defending Childhood Initiative. The focus of this project is to not only prevent violence, but also to identify and treat children who are experiencing trauma as a result of exposure to violence in their homes, schools, or communities. More than 150 professionals have been trained to assess for trauma in children and over 16,000 children have been screened to determine if services for evidence-based treatment are needed. The DCFS and the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile Division, have been key partners to ensure that children are screened and referred appropriately.
Homicide (cont.)

• WVSC manages the Children Who Witness Violence program, which provides immediate crisis stabilization to children in the aftermath of exposure to violence.

• WVSC promotes child and family safety by being the home of the Violence Against Women Safe Havens Grant, a program providing supervised visitation and safe exchange services through a contract with the Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center.

• WVSC is available for outreach and education in the community. Presentations to schools, human/social service providers, medical personnel, and law enforcement are a means of linking the Center to the needs of the community.

• The Cleveland Division of Police has made it a policy to refer all children who witness any violent situation to the Children Who Witness Violence program.

• The MetroHealth Medical Center departments of pediatrics and social work present information on domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, and mental health issues for the medical providers throughout the system.

• The Cuyahoga County Family Drug Court works with parents whose children are alleged to be abused or neglected, and who are at risk of losing their children because of drug dependency. This intensive program is designed to reduce the time that a child may spend in placement while the parent receives treatment.

• In concert with the Defending Childhood Initiative, the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County has a network of adolescent treatment agencies specializing in services to teenagers, in addition to its school-based and community prevention programming.

• The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court has many interventions and programs to assist youth who are in their system.

  • The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative is a nationwide program that is being used in Cuyahoga County to develop options other than the use of a detention center for court-involved youth.

  • Effective Practices in Community Supervision is a new intervention method used by probation officers to help offenders make positive changes in their thinking and behavior so they will be less likely to commit a new crime.

  • Juvenile Court has a School-Based Probation Unit. In this partnership with the schools, school-based probation officers provide control, supervision, and incentives that delinquent youth often need to attend school regularly and comply with school rules.

  • Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a day treatment program for youth who are struggling to meet the conditions of their probation. This year a parenting component was added to address the needs of the parents whose children are in this program.

Suicide

• The purpose of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County’s suicide prevention awareness campaign is to reach as many citizens of Cuyahoga County with the message: “Do you know someone thinking about suicide?” In 2014, a direct mail postcard campaign was initiated for households in cities with higher suicide rates. The county campaign continues to direct people who are in need of help or more information to the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County’s 24-hour suicide prevention, mental health information and referral line for adults and children (216) 623-6888. This hotline is operated by FrontLine Service. Crisis Chat is an online emotional support for anyone who is depressed or thinking of suicide. Crisis Text is a new emotional support service. These tools are particularly appealing to children and teens. Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults ages 10-24, and is the fifth-leading cause of death among 5-14 year olds. Accordingly, the campaign targets all age groups including children and their families.

  • The ADAMHS Board is the lead agency for the coordination of school-based mental health and prevention services. The mental health needs of students are identified and addressed by on-site clinicians who provide counseling, community support services, assessment, prevention, and consultation. This collaboration between community agencies, public systems, and school personnel increases the opportunity to prevent more serious difficulties, including suicide.

  • The ADAMHS Board’s prevention providers deliver alcohol and drug prevention programs in the schools. These programs focus on reducing the likelihood of behavioral health problems.

  • Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court has a Mental Health Court that targets youth who have been identified with mental health issues. These children are provided intensive supervision and service coordination.
Suicide (cont.)

- The Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice program is an initiative designed to reduce the potential for deeper involvement in the juvenile court system by implementing comprehensive evidence-based treatment for identified at-risk youth, ages 12-17 years.

Interagency Actions

As a result of the Child Fatality Review Program, interagency communication and collaboration have been strengthened.

- The partnership between Help Me Grow (HMG) and the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) continues to benefit from the creation of a liaison position for the two systems. This individual is responsible for ensuring referrals contain needed information to successfully engage families, troubleshooting system-to-system issues, increasing the sharing of information between systems, and ultimately helping families to stay engaged in services longer.

- The Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) centralized system is a cooperative effort with Help Me Grow, the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board, the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Invest in

Children, the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County, and DCFS. This serves as a single point of entry for children, from birth to 6 years, who may be experiencing emotional, behavioral, and social problems.

- HMG, MomsFirst, and the Ohio Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative collaborate in their roles and responsibilities to support the joint service delivery system for expectant families and families with young children.

- MetroHealth Medical Center (MHMC) hosts a quarterly meeting with DCFS to improve collaboration between the two agencies and to update policy information.

- Children in foster care are often survivors of abuse or unsafe living arrangements. To meet the needs of these special youngsters, MHMC and DCFS initiated a Medical Home for Children in Foster Care program. Over 1,000 children have been seen by MHMC staff and enrolled in a coordinated tracking program designed to improve their current and long-term health and well-being.