

CHCF CHIP Summary

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Professional Title, Organization: Director, San Francisco Department of Public Health, Maternal Child Adolescent Health Section

CHIP Title: Leadership and Advocacy for Black Maternal Health Outcomes

Project Description: Black birthing mothers and their babies are dying in one of the most progressive and wealthiest cities of the country. I engaged San Francisco's city officials and the Department of Public Health leadership to do something about health inequities and improve disparities impacting Black/African American birthing people. I had the opportunity to present data on preterm birth, infant mortality and poor maternal health outcomes, address social determinates of health, and advocate for new funds with recommendations to close the gaps. This was important to me because I was a new Director during historical events with a pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests, and racism happening across the country. The goal of the project was how to advocate and receive funds to improve health outcomes for vulnerable population.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned:

- In my new role as a new Director during the pandemic and systemic racism showing up across the country, I immediately addressed the Black/African American birthing population health inequities with the Board of Supervisors, Health Commissioners and City leaders.
- This required me to do several presentations, advocate, and overcome barriers during COVID-19 restrictions with less staff to support this effort.
- After looking at poor birth outcomes and existing data from our programs i.e., Black Infant Health Program, new doula services, and community partners working with the Black/African American birthing mothers, we identified Community Based Organizations that would receive funds to support this effort.
- I obtained \$2,275,000 of new Board of Supervisor funds from San Francisco Department of Public Health General Funds to support this work. The funds are ongoing and sustainable.
- I contracted with 7 community partners that received funds to support Black/African American birthing population. I developed metrics for tracking with clear scope of work goals.
- The new funds helped address food insecurity, access to doula services, parent support groups, access to housing and financial stipends, and begin to develop a health care model that supports vulnerable birthing population.

Next Steps:

- Continue working with the community partners that received funds for fiscal year 2022 and prepare an end of the year summary report on deliverables and metrics to present to key stakeholders by June 30, 2022.
- Lesson learned is to monitor the Department of Public Health Contractors team early in the process to ensure contracts are executed and certified in a timely manner to ensure community partners have funds to do the work.
- I plan to train and involve other leaders on my team in this upcoming new fiscal year to plan, learn DPH contracts processes, and work with community partners to carry out scope of work.
- Continue to support advocacy efforts in addressing disparities among vulnerable birthing people at the local, state and federal levels.