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Ohio Funding Five Projects in Columbus Area to Combat Infant Mortality

Collaborative efforts aim to improve birth outcomes and reduce the racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality

COLUMBUS – As part of the Kasich Administration’s efforts to combat infant mortality, the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) has announced new investments in five community initiatives in Franklin County aimed at reducing infant mortality.

The [2014 Infant Mortality Data Report](#) from the Ohio Department of Health showed slight improvement in Ohio’s infant mortality rate, down from 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013 to 6.8 in 2014. However, Ohio’s rate – especially the black infant mortality rate – remains too high and exceeds the national average.

In Ohio Governor John R. Kasich’s last budget, Ohio allocated \$26.8 million over two years to support community-driven proposals to combat infant mortality at the local level and enhance coordination among various agencies that provide care for women and infants at risk. Together with its five contracted managed care plans, Ohio Medicaid has engaged local leaders in nine Ohio communities – Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark, and Summit counties – to identify innovative projects that will connect women and infants to quality health care and care management.

“This is a new approach to combatting infant mortality in Ohio,” said John McCarthy, state Medicaid director. “Rather than pursuing one-size-fits-all remedies that lack results, we are looking to initiatives that address the specific needs of individual communities”

Through CelebrateOne, Ohio Medicaid awarded funding to support the following proposals:

- HandsOn Central Ohio (211) will hire a resource specialist to provide up-to-date resource support for community health workers.
Total Funding Amount: \$150,000
- StepOne will implement a new service to link women to prenatal care after conducting an initial screen of health and risk factors, coordinate presumptive eligibility and schedule an initial prenatal appointment. Support also includes confirmation of pregnancy, appointment reminders and follow up, and coordination of transportation.
Total Funding Amount: \$830,000
- Moms2B programs will be established in four new neighborhoods, starting in Linden, to offer prenatal and first-year-of-life education and resources. The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center will provide an additional \$20,000 for each site.
Total Funding Amount: \$520,000

- Centering pregnancy programs, which integrate maternal health care assessment, education and support, will expand to three additional locations serving pregnant women in high-risk neighborhoods.
Total Funding Amount: \$600,000
- The Maternal and Infant Recovery Clinic will provide additional prenatal support for addicted pregnant women between prenatal appointments and weekly group treatment sessions, and also add nursing support to the addiction treatment programs.
Total Funding Amount: \$200,000

Total Medicaid investment across the five projects is \$2,300,000.

The Ohio Department of Medicaid serves more than 3 million residents across Ohio. More than 80 percent of all Medicaid beneficiaries are served through the five contracted Medicaid managed care plans – Buckeye Health Plan, CareSource, Molina Healthcare, Paramount Advantage, and United Healthcare Community Plan.

More information on Medicaid managed care can be found [here](#).