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Ohio Funding Five Projects in Cincinnati 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 Hamilton 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 Cradle Cincinnati, Ohio Medicaid awarded funding to support the following proposals:

- Cradle Cincinnati will partner with United Way’s 211 line to centralize intake for families in Hamilton County. The funding will support the 211 line, advertising and marketing, and two Cradle Cincinnati Connections Navigators.
Total Funding Amount: \$370,000
- Through a collaborative effort with Every Child Succeeds, Healthy Moms and Babies, Cincinnati Health Department, and TriHealth Outreach Ministries, Cradle Cincinnati will hire 18 community health workers and 6 Home Visitors to reach pregnant women in the targeted communities.
Total Funding Amount: \$1,400,000
- Health Care Access Now will serve as the community hub for referral distribution of clients received from the centralized intake for partner agencies employing community health care workers and utilizing the community pathways model of care.
Total Funding Amount: \$250,000

- Community health workers and home visitors will receive assistance in obtaining continuing education credits.
Total Funding Amount: \$85,000

The Center for Closing the Health Gap also received funding for the following project:

- The Center for Closing the Health Gap will recruit and train 14 community wellness coaches to assist communities in building a culture of health, collaborate with community business owners and organizations to assist in delivering education and strategies regarding infant mortality, and teach residents to advocate for needed resources for a healthy community.
Total Funding Amount: \$732,000

Total Medicaid investment across the five projects is \$2,837,000.

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](#).