



2021 BUDGET PRIORITY: SUPPORT MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

LEAGUE RECOMMENDATION:

Support programs that help all moms and babies thrive, including increased funding for home visiting, the creation of a centralized intake system for Michigan’s home visiting programs, and restored funding for state family planning and pregnancy prevention services to previous levels.

BACKGROUND:

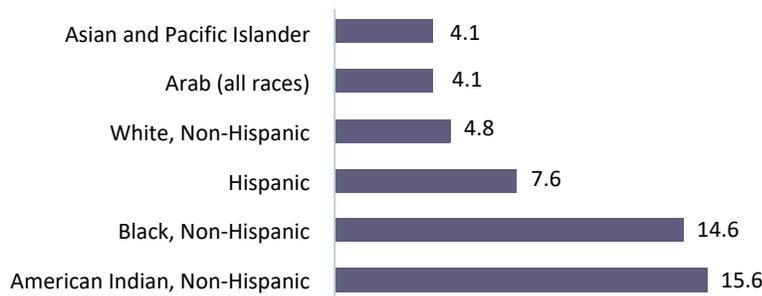
Maternal and infant health outcomes are good measures of a state’s priorities. Home visiting is a highly successful strategy to improve the health and overall well-being of pregnant and parenting families, and family planning programs support the health of all women—mothers or not—across their life course.

Michigan invests state, federal and private dollars to support eight evidence-based, voluntary home visiting services. Of the total investment about 44% are state resources, 55% are federal and 1% are private. In the 2018 budget year, Michigan’s home visiting programs served approximately 30,000 families, though the need is much higher.

There are eight home visiting models in Michigan, each of which has distinct strengths and areas of focus to support the different challenges families may face. A centralized intake system, defined as a one-stop entry point for screening families’ needs and referring families to the program that best fits, would foster greater program effectiveness as well as improved recruitment, enrollment and retention.

Over the past several years, Michigan has significantly reduced funding for sexual health education, pregnancy prevention and family planning services even though an estimated 52% of pregnancies in Michigan are unintended and sexually transmitted infections are on the rise.

Michigan Infant Death Rates (Per 1,000 Live Births) by Race and Ethnicity, 2017



Source: 2018 Michigan Resident Infant Death File, 2018 Michigan Fetal Death Registry Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Home visiting programs work. Decades of evaluation and research show that participating in home visiting increases prenatal care utilization and reduces preterm birth and tobacco use. Parents are encouraged to read and talk with their babies, which results in improved language and cognitive development in children served by a home visiting program. Plus, home visiting supports greater financial security for families because participating parents are more apt to be employed or enrolled in school.

Providing adequate access to sexual health education, pregnancy prevention and family planning services can improve the health and well-being of adults and babies. Recognizing and adopting healthy behaviors before conception is an important step in preparing to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. However, if a pregnancy is unintended or mistimed an expectant person may still have unhealthy behaviors or delay receiving necessary health care, which can affect the health of the baby. Family planning services should be seen as a means of optimizing health status before a planned pregnancy.

Compared to other states, Michigan experiences high rates of infant mortality, preterm births and low birthweight births. Services are needed to support pregnant and parenting people, regardless of whether a pregnancy was initially unintended.