THE ORIGINS AND FIRST YEAR OF FIMR

In 2014, the Florida Department of Health in St Lucie County (FDOH-SLC) noticed black infants were dying at a higher rate than white infants. To address this disparity in infant mortality rates (IMR), FDOH-SLC wrote a grant and secured funding from Allegany Franciscan Ministries to hire a fetal and infant mortality review coordinator. FIMR is a national program whose goal is to enhance the health and well-being of women, infants and families by improving the community resources and the delivery of services available to them.

In the first year, FIMR in St. Lucie County reviewed cases of fetal demise and infant deaths from 2014 to the present. Twenty-six cases were chosen for review; most from the Lincoln Park area. FIMR established a Case Review Team (CRT), whose members worked diligently to assess the case abstracts, consisting of all medical records and family interviews. A multitude of recommendations were generated. The recommendations were compiled and disseminated to the agency best suited to address the specific issues. The agencies identified to tackle recommendations included Health Care Providers, Healthy Start, Hospitals and the Community Action Team (CAT). FIMR is currently establishing a CAT to implement interventions.

In addition to forming a CRT, FIMR conducted a sleep survey, as sleep related deaths occur and can possibly be prevented. A sampling of 51 parents was asked about infant safe sleep, from whom did they obtain safe sleep information, and who they trusted for childcare information. Although the majority of parents (92%) stated babies should sleep on their backs, some of the babies who died in their sleep had been placed or found on their stomachs. FIMR CRT evaluated the ABC (Alone, Back, Crib) safe sleep message. Four of the sleep related deaths in SLC included infants who were left alone, unsupervised for 6-8 hours. Staff at the Department of Children & Families were notified that the “Alone” part of the message may be too vague and more information was needed on the ABC safe sleep flyers.

In the upcoming year, FIMR will continue organizing CRT meetings, establish a CAT, and assess and analyze all fetal and infant deaths that may occur. We request your assistance to assess cases, make recommendations for improvements and implement interventions to decrease racial disparities in infant mortality in St. Lucie County.

FIMR will implement recommendations generated by the CRT to reduce infant mortality in year 2

Welcome to Kit Santacroce, Disparities Project Coordinator at Kids Connected by Design. Kit worked on one of the first FIMR projects in NY, in the 1990s. E-mail: ksantacroce@kcbd.org

In 2017 there have unfortunately been 12 fetal demises & 13 infant deaths (including 4 sleep-related deaths). Much work needs to be done…  

NEXT FIMR CRT/CAT MEETING  
9-11 AM  
March 23, 2018  
Larry J. Lee Public Health Building  
5150 NW Milner Dr., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983
FIMR WORKS WITH THE HEALTHY START COALITION OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY TO REDUCE INFANT MORTALITY

For more than 20 years, Healthy Start has been working to reduce Infant Mortality Rates. Healthy Start assists pregnant women, inter-conception women, infants and children up to age three to obtain the health care and social and medical support needed to reduce the risks for poor maternal and child health outcomes. Healthy Start offers universal risk screening for all Florida pregnant women and infants to ensure that early care is directed to those families where there is the best chance of preventing or minimizing adverse outcomes.

THE RANGE OF HEALTHY START SERVICES AVAILABLE TO IDENTIFIED WOMEN AND INFANTS INCLUDE:

- Information, referral and ongoing care coordination and support to assure access to needed services
- Psychosocial, nutritional and smoking cessation counseling
- Childbirth, breastfeeding, parenting and substance abuse education
- Home visiting
- Inter-conception education and counseling
- Nutritional counseling
- Mental health counseling
- Infant Safety/CPR
- And much more!

Under Florida Statute, it is required that the OB provider offer Healthy Start Prenatal Risk Screen at the first prenatal visit. Once the baby is born at the hospital, the Healthy Start Infant Risk Screen is done. The completion of the screens is imperative to identify risks and begin services to ensure better birth outcomes.

Contact Sonya Gabriel, BN, RN at: 772-462-3955

Many thanks to the dedicated Health Care Providers and Concerned Citizens who participated in Case Reviews in 2017

Michelle Akins, Angela Bell, Chief Brian Blizzard, Heather Brigance, Jennifer Chandler, Mally Chrulski, Robyn Connor, Raymond Correa, Jim Dwyer, Sonya Gabriel, Tricia Goulet, Amy Gregory, Jennifer Harris, Beth Hawn, Pastor Hazel Hoylman, Dr. Ruth Kim, Kim Kossler, Dr. Juliette Lomax-Homier, Erin Mercado, Dr. Rebecca McPherson, Edgar Morales, Michelle Peaslee, Laurie Prim, Mary Ranier, Angela Roberson, Daphne Shaffer-Petersen, Lorna Sinclair, Angela Smith, Clint Sperber, Mikaela Stoessel, Dr. Ruel Stoessel, Kathy Swan-Fitch, Lisa von Seelen, Dr. Sofia Thomas, Dr. David Walters and Dr. Charles Zollicoffer

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