Improving Birth Outcomes in Racine

The Racine LIHF Collaborative reached more than 1,000 community members to raise awareness about the state’s disparities in infant mortality.

►Description: As part of the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF), community stakeholders in Racine established a collaborative to enhance coordination in service delivery systems and work towards community change at environmental, policy and system levels. The collaborative developed a community action plan that reflects the community’s vision and strategies for improving healthy birth outcomes.

►Relevance: An African American baby born in Racine is almost three times more likely to die before his or her first birthday than a white infant. Addressing disparities in birth outcomes will lead to improvements in overall community health and well-being.

►Partnerships: The Racine LIHF Collaborative organized local home visiting providers with the goal of creating an access point for families seeking support services.

►Results: Established in 2010, the Racine LIHF collaborative explored approaches to create system and social change through new and existing programs, such as the Birthing Project: Sister/Friends and the YMCA’s Focus on Father Initiative. Racine LIHF’s community action plan was created after an in-depth review of research, data, community discussions and site visits. Key recommendations included increasing support for young adults, mothers and fathers, neighborhood access to services and a mentorship/navigation program that connects individuals to services.

The collaborative leveraged over $460,000 from public and private sources for recommended existing and evidence-based programs services to support pregnant women and their families and address relationship building, stress reduction and the role of fathers in the lives of their children.

The Racine community action plan is available at www.med.wisc.edu/LIHF.