Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin

Project findings confirmed that the ready availability of social, economic and service resources contributes to healthy birth outcomes.

Description: Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin examined the factors, public policies and programs that affect birth outcomes, and compared results in Dane and Racine counties to draw inferences about what succeeded in improving infant mortality rates in Dane County.

Relevance: Infant mortality, specifically the disparities in birth outcomes between white and African American infants, is one of the most critical health problems facing Wisconsin. Currently the state's infant mortality rate among African Americans is the fifth worst in the nation, and 86 percent of these infant deaths occur in southeast Wisconsin, including Racine County.

Results: The project established a Community Advisory Board and generated extensive community involvement with use of volunteers, community agencies and medical, graduate and undergraduate students. The project team collected data in four separate studies, all of which compared Dane and Racine counties: Medicaid coverage and infant mortality, a survey of African American and white mothers, community asset mapping and hospital birth record analysis. The project partnered with the Dane and Racine county health departments, health care representatives and community members to conduct the medical record reviews and surveys.

Review of hospital birth records indicated overall improvements in minimizing the risk factors associated with poor birth outcomes in Racine County. Findings confirmed that the availability of social, economic and service resources contributes to healthy birth outcomes in Dane and Racine counties, and recommended further research targeting highly concentrated and contiguous neighborhoods with high deprivation.


REDUCING INFANT MORTALITY DISPARITIES IN WISCONSIN

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Grant Program: Collaborative Health Sciences
Award: $425,232 over three years