Transforming Healthcare in Missouri Part II:
Advancing Innovation and Equity
Maternal health and infant mortality

Infant mortality is often used as a key indicator of population health and the effectiveness of the healthcare system. The United States has a relatively high infant mortality rate compared to other developed countries.

Infant Mortality

- The state of Missouri has consistently had infant mortality rates higher than the national average, with a rate of 6.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016[1].
- From 2005 through 2014, infants of non-Hispanic black women had consistently higher rates of infant mortality in the U.S.[2]
- Today, the infant mortality rate for black babies is the highest among all babies at 11.4 deaths per 1,000 babies, compared with 4.9 per 1,000 white babies[3]. The gap persists even as the mother's education and income rises[4].
- This issue is prevalent in both rural and urban areas: the infant mortality rate in 2016 was the same in St. Louis City as it was in Cole County and Saline County[5] - 10 deaths per 1000 live births.
- The top five causes of infant mortality in Missouri are birth defects, preterm birth, maternal complications during pregnancy, SIDS, and other injuries (e.g., suffocation)[6].

[1] National Center for Health Statistics. (2018, January 11). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm

[2] Mathews,T. & Driscoll, A. K. (2017, March). Trends in Infant Mortality in the United States, 2005-2014. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db279.pdf

[3] Infant Mortality. (2018, August 3). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm

[4] Washburn, L. (2011, March 02). Medical mystery endures: Black babies at twice risk of whites for death, study indicates. Retrieved from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-03-medical-mystery-black-babies-whites.html

[5] County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (2016), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/missouri/2016/measure/outcomes/129/data

[6] St. Louis Fetal-Infant Mortality Review. (2017, March). Retrieved from http://generatehealthstl.org/docs/FIMR_10_Year_Report.pdf

Maternal Health

- According to the United Health Foundation's 2016 Health of Women and Children Report, the national maternal mortality rate is about 20 deaths per 100,000 live births, while Missouri's maternal mortality rate was 28.5 deaths per 100,000 live births (42nd in the nation). However, the rate of death among black women is higher, 65 deaths per 100,000 live births[7].
- The leading causes of maternal death in Missouri are cardiac-related, with embolisms caused by blood clots at the top of the list. The state's high rates of smoking and obesity during pregnancy put women at higher risk for those complications.
- These risks are compounded when pregnant women do not have access to regular doctor visits: more than 1 in 6 Missouri women, 17.5 percent, did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy[8].
- Of Missouri's 101 rural counties, 43 have no hospitals and another 26 counties have hospitals without dedicated obstetric beds. In more than two-thirds of rural Missouri, a pregnant woman cannot go to a hospital with obstetric services to give birth without traveling out of her county.

[7] Health of Women and Children. (2018). Retrieved from https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/maternal_mortality/state/MO

[8] Mosley, M.J., McBride, D.G., Chitman, R., Garikapaty, V., (2017). *Missouri Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) 2017 Surveillance Report*. Retrieved from https://health.mo.gov/data/prams/