



Ohio Funding Six Projects in Butler County to Combat Infant Mortality Collaborative efforts aim to improve birth outcomes and reduce the racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality

COLUMBUS – As part of the Kasich Administration’s efforts to combat infant mortality, the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) has announced new investments in six community initiatives in Butler County aimed at reducing infant mortality. The 2014 Infant Mortality Data Report from the Ohio Department of Health showed slight improvement in Ohio’s infant mortality rate, down from 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013 to 6.8 in 2014. However, Ohio’s rate – especially the black infant mortality rate – remains too high and exceeds the national average.

In Ohio Governor John R. Kasich’s last budget, Ohio allocated \$26.8 million over two years to support community-driven proposals to combat infant mortality at the local level and enhance coordination among various agencies that provide care for women and infants at risk. Together with its five contracted managed care plans, Ohio Medicaid has engaged local leaders in nine Ohio communities – Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark, and Summit counties – to identify innovative projects that will connect women and infants to quality health care and care management. “This is a new approach to combatting infant mortality in Ohio,” said John McCarthy, state Medicaid director. “Rather than pursuing one-size-fits-all remedies that lack results, we are looking to initiatives that address the specific needs of individual communities.”

Through the Butler County Partnership to Reduce Infant Mortality (PRIM) (513-887-5251), Ohio Medicaid awarded funding to support the following proposals:

- Two additional Centering Pregnancy practices will be developed, possibly at Atrium Medical Center and Primary Health Solutions. Other sites are also under consideration. These practices will target African American women, and provide services such as onsite childcare and transportation to and from appointments. Total Funding Amount: \$255,683
- Ten community health workers will be trained in basic and advanced prenatal skills (doula and lactation counseling) to reach out to high risk pregnant women. Total Funding Amount: \$723,000

- Transportation (ten unplanned trips) will be provided for the county's highest risk, low income African American pregnant women. High Hopes and Health Me Grown and Early Intervention will identify participants based on screening by community health workers and service coordinators. Total Funding Amount: \$900,000
- The Celebrate Fatherhood Initiative for Butler County will provide parenting and fatherhood classes, as well as a support system for potential fathers and new fathers, targeting African American fathers and significant others of pregnant women receiving Medicaid. Total Funding Amount: \$275,044
- Faith-based organizations will provide education classes and support for women that are already mothers and pregnant to increase good health focusing on obesity, nutrition, physical activity, and parenting. Total Funding Amount: \$182,800
- The Nurturing Every Step Together (NEST) program, an interfaith community collaborative serving recovering women, will be expanded to include high-risk African American expectant/new mothers and their families. Total Funding Amount: \$14,500

Total Medicaid investment across the six projects is \$2,480,344. The Ohio Department of Medicaid serves more than 3 million residents across Ohio. More than 80 percent of all Medicaid beneficiaries are served through the five contracted Medicaid managed care plans – Buckeye Health Plan, CareSource, Molina Healthcare, Paramount Advantage, and United Healthcare Community Plan.

For more information on Butler County Partnership to Reduce Infant Mortality (PRIM), or to get involved in local efforts, call 513-887-5251.