

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025

# Kansas Community Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality: State Town Hall Meeting



# Today's Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- The Role of CCHI/KBEN in Advancing Birth Equity in Kansas
- Maternal, Paternal, & Infant Health in Kansas
- The Community in CCHI
- Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality (OCPIM)
- Call to Action
- Audience Q&A
- Final Remarks





# Welcome & Introductions

**Sharla Smith, BS, MPH, PhD**  
Founder and Executive  
Director,  
Kansas Birth Equity Network

# State Town Hall Meeting Overview

- Building a statewide collaboration connecting communities and healthcare institutions
- Centering community leadership to improve maternal, paternal, and infant health outcomes
- Driving advocacy and sustainable change to create more just and responsive systems



# Partners and Supporters



## KBEN Members



Health Forward  
FOUNDATION



Wyandotte  
Health  
Foundation





# The Role of CCHI/KBEN in Advancing Birth Equity in Kansas

**Stacy Scott, PhD, MPA, CSJ**  
Vice President  
NICHQ



# Our Vision

NICHQ envisions a world where every community, filled with realized power, leads transformative efforts that achieve optimal health for mothers, birthing families, and infants.



# Our Mission

Community-Centered Hospital Initiative (CCHI) aims to create a roadmap in which communities will lead and collaborate with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs), healthcare entities, and Perinatal Quality Collaboratives (PQCs), focusing on joint initiatives to optimize health outcomes for mothers, birthing families, and infants.



*The Future is Now*

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We encourage communities to be proactive in creating a better future and collectively work together to save lives by *learning from the past, working in the present, and positively impacting the future.*

# *Positively Impacting the Future*

# Creating a Roadmap that Leads to Success

- The key is to define success not just in terms of outputs or metrics, but also in building trust, centering community voice, and enabling transformative change, even if that change is gradual and requires persistent, thoughtful navigation of challenges.
- Ultimately, the innovative, community-driven strategies developed through CCHI will contribute to measurable improvements in maternal, pregnancy, and infant health outcomes.



# Radical Imagination

- Using our radical imagination to address complex systemic issues requires a willingness to step outside traditional, linear thinking.
- Building trust and psychological safety within the team and with external partners is crucial for allowing the flexibility and openness required for this type of transformative work.



# Radical Imagination

“Stepping outside the confines of the now into the expansiveness of what could be.”

**Dr. Tanisha G. Hill-Jarrett**

Hill-Jarrett TG. The Black radical imagination: a space of hope and possible futures. *Frontiers in Neurology*. 2023;14

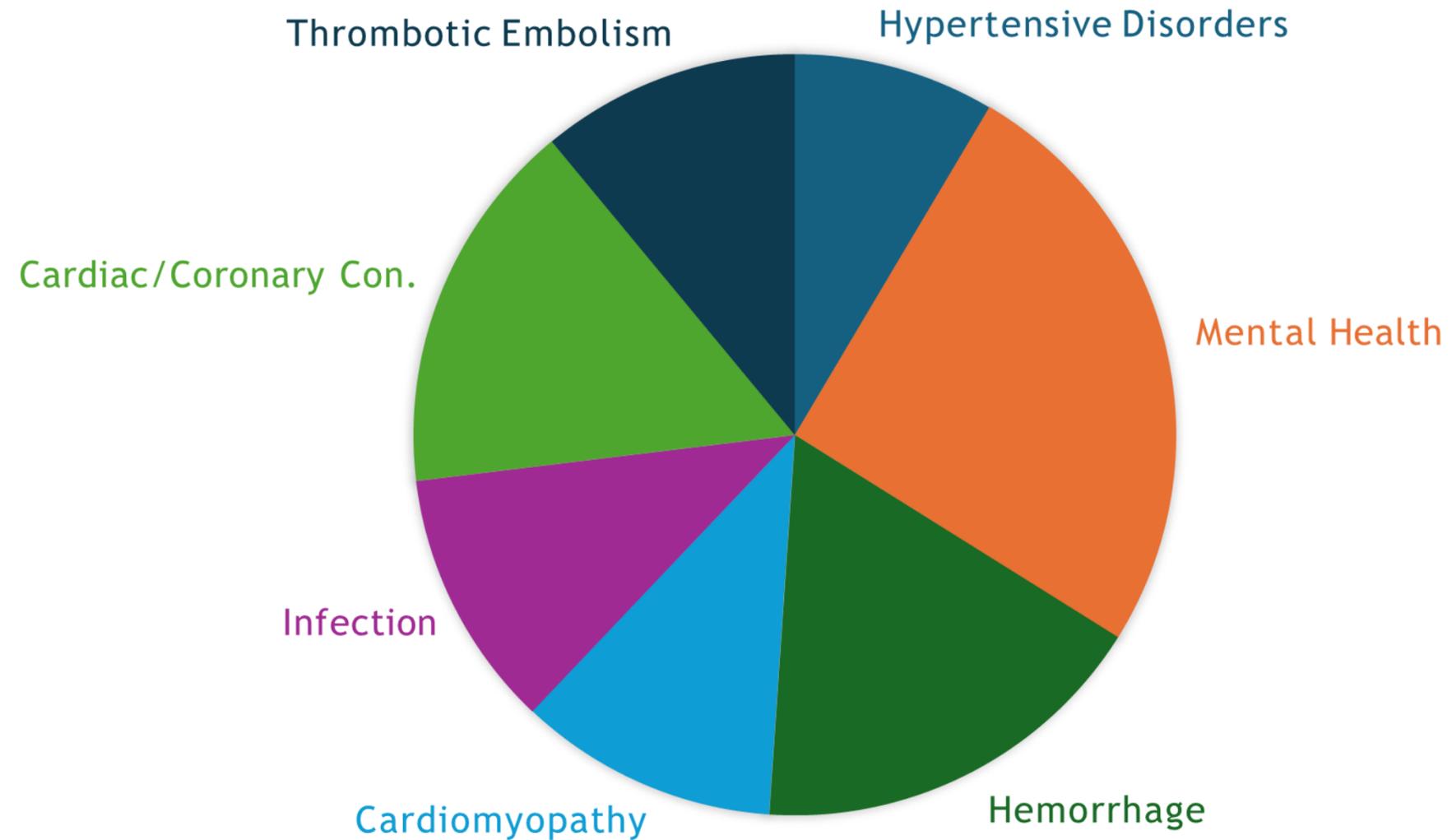


# Maternal, Paternal, & Infant Health in Kansas

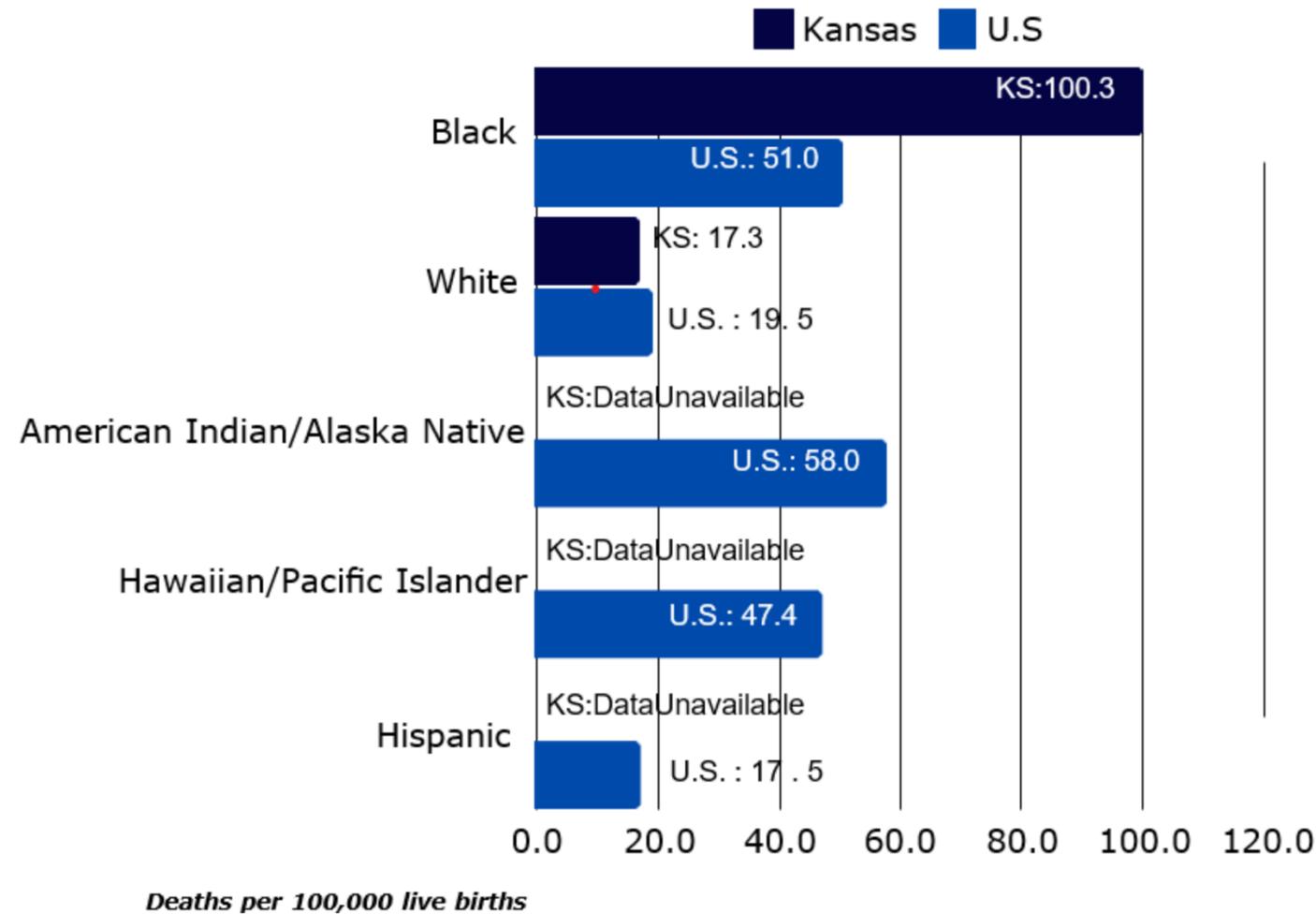
Sharla Smith, BS, MPH, PhD

# Causes of Maternal Mortality (2017-2019)

LEADING CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.



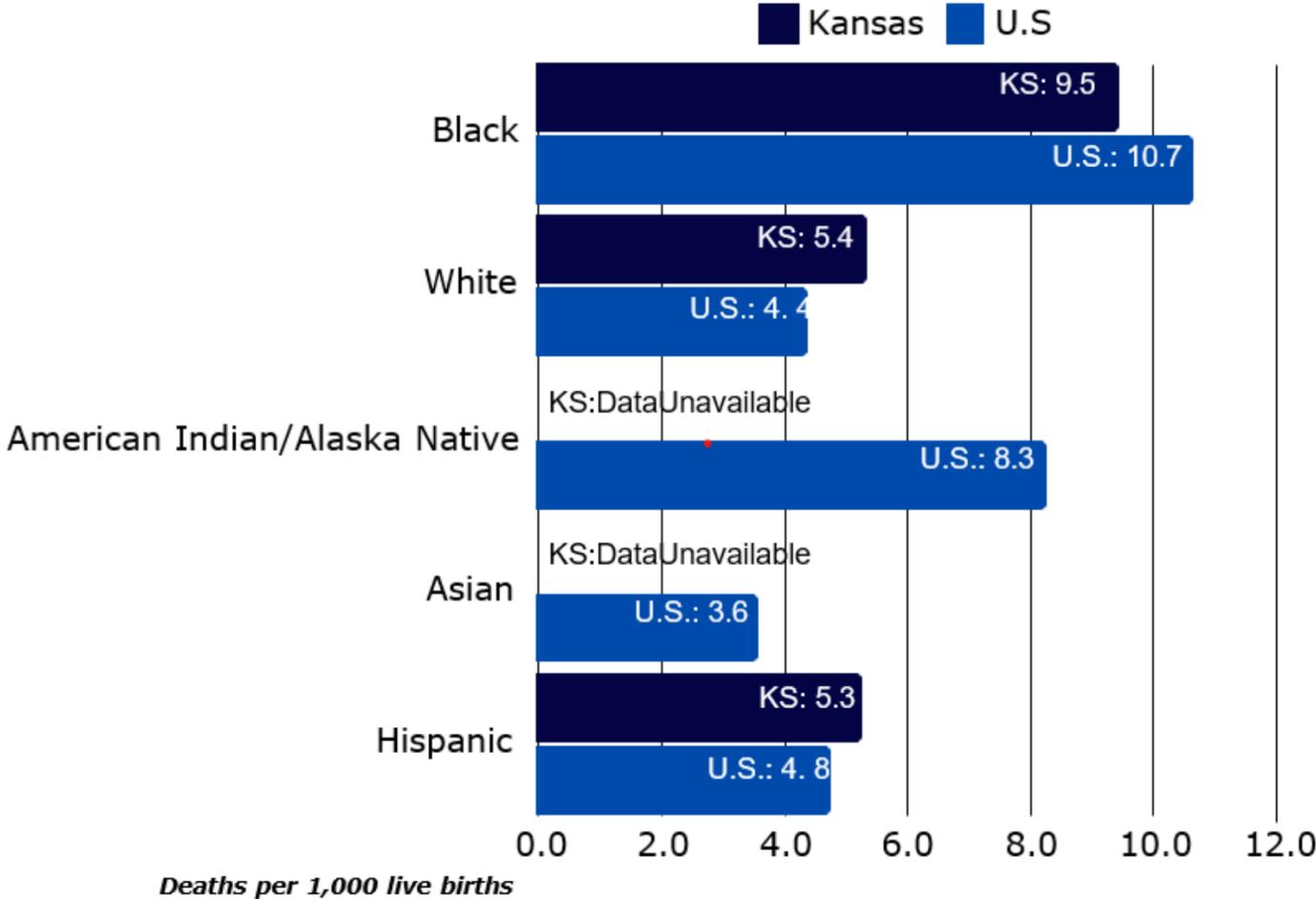
# Maternal Mortality : Kansas



In Kansas, Black women and birthing people are **5.8** times more likely to die from pregnancy related issues than white birthing people.

America's Health Rankings, 2025  
Data Years: 2018-2022

# Infant Mortality: Kansas



In Kansas, Black infants are 1.8 times more likely to die than white infants

America's Health Rankings, 2025  
Data Years: 2018-2022

# Overview and History

## Who We Are

### Our Root: Community

- Collaboration with Divine Nine Chapters in Wichita, KS
  - Raise awareness
  - Develop solutions
  - Celebrate Black Families: Celebrate Day 366

### Today:

- Community-Centered Network
- Members across Kansas & KC Metro
- Diverse Members: birth workers, clinicians, parents, community members, & more!
- Center the experiences of Black families
- Create space for collaboration
- Celebrate Black Babies & Families
- Develop solutions that improve the health of Black families



# Our Approach

## KBEN Definition of Birth Equity

*Shifting the focus from blaming Black mothers and birthing people for their health outcomes to **holding systems accountable—demanding policies, programs, and reparative action that acknowledge and heal historical trauma.***



# Research

## *Research Agenda/Solutions List*

### Areas of Focus:



#### **Maternal & Infant Health Research**

[Pregnancy Related Hypertension & Preeclampsia](#)  
[Prenatal Care](#)  
[Maternal Mental Health](#)



#### **Healthcare Systems**



#### **Policy & Advocacy**



Kansas Birth Equity Network

## FIVE-YEAR RESEARCH AGENDA ON BLACK MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH



Kansas Birth Equity Network

February 2022

# Capacity Building

*Healthy Blue Mini Grants*

**\$50,000 in Mini Grant Funding**

## 01 Male Postpartum Mental Health

*Rodney Copridge*

A conversation centered on mental health for fathers in the postpartum period.

## 02 Weekend of Washing: Family Day

*Kimberly Weaver*

Adds a Saturday Family Day to an existing free laundromat initiative that is typically on the 3rd Monday of each month.

## 03 Perinatal Mental Health

*Dr. Amittia Parker*

Where, When, How does perinatal mental health screening occur in the KC Metro?

### Broderick Crawford Birth Equity Mini Grants

Sistahs Can We Talk Health Fair	Children's Mercy Hospital: Community Support Funds
Dope Black Dads Fatherly Celebration	Joyea Marshall: Community Support Grant
Sister Doula Film Screening Event	Nozella Brown: Transformative Women's Experience
Dope Black Dads: New Dad Workshops	Kyle Ellison: Women's Health Song
Queens Village Maternal Healing Meetups	Storytailor: Stories about Maternal and Infant Health
Topeka Doula Project: Black Maternal Health Week Event	Event Funding for Health of the Community
Gestational Diabetes Project	Event Funding for Health of the Community
Diamonds N Rough: Mens Postpartum Workshop	Event Funding for Health of the Community

*Supporting & Amplifying Existing Community Efforts*

# Knowledge

## *Birth Equity Training*

- Developed with KBEN members
- Centers the lived experiences of Black birthing persons and partners, doulas, etc.
- Stop, Look, Listen, & Think Campaign

## *Kansas Perinatal Quality Collaborative*

- Partnership with KDHE & KPQC
- Provided training to Fourth Trimester Initiative Champions & their colleagues across the state

Module	Title
1	Introduction
2	The Need for Birth Equity
3	Community Engagement
4	The Uncomfortable Truth of Bias
5	The Black Postpartum Experience
6	Respectful Maternal Care



# Equity in Healthcare

*Birth Equity Clinical Scholars Training Program (BEST)*

**Partnership with KUMC OBGYN & Family Medicine Residency Programs**

2 Year Fellowship Program

- Educate and empower providers to create and sustain inclusive, accessible, and equitable maternal care, specifically for Black women
- Trained in Birth Equity
- Monthly Didactics in research, policy, community engagement, and coordination of care
- Service Projects with Community Organizations
  - Shadowing MCHWs & Doulas
  - Service at Uzazi Village
- Research Project related to birth equity & reproductive justice
- Policy Engagement



**KBEN**  
Kansas Birth  
Equity Network



**nichQ**  
National Institute for  
Children's Health Quality

# Advocacy/Power/Equity

## Policy Partners

- Thrive Allen County
- Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
- Kansas Birth Justice Society

## KS Paid Family Leave

- Partnership with KS organizations to advance family-centered policies.
- We provide information to guide advocacy efforts.

## Kansas Momnibus Act

## Zero to 3: Built for Babies Convening





# Fatherhood

Barbershop Initiative: Paternal Postpartum Health



BARBERSHOPS

REACHING OVER  
70 CLIENTS





# The Community in CCHI

**Michelle Edison, MPH, MS**  
CCHI Project Director,  
NICHQ

# Thinking BIG

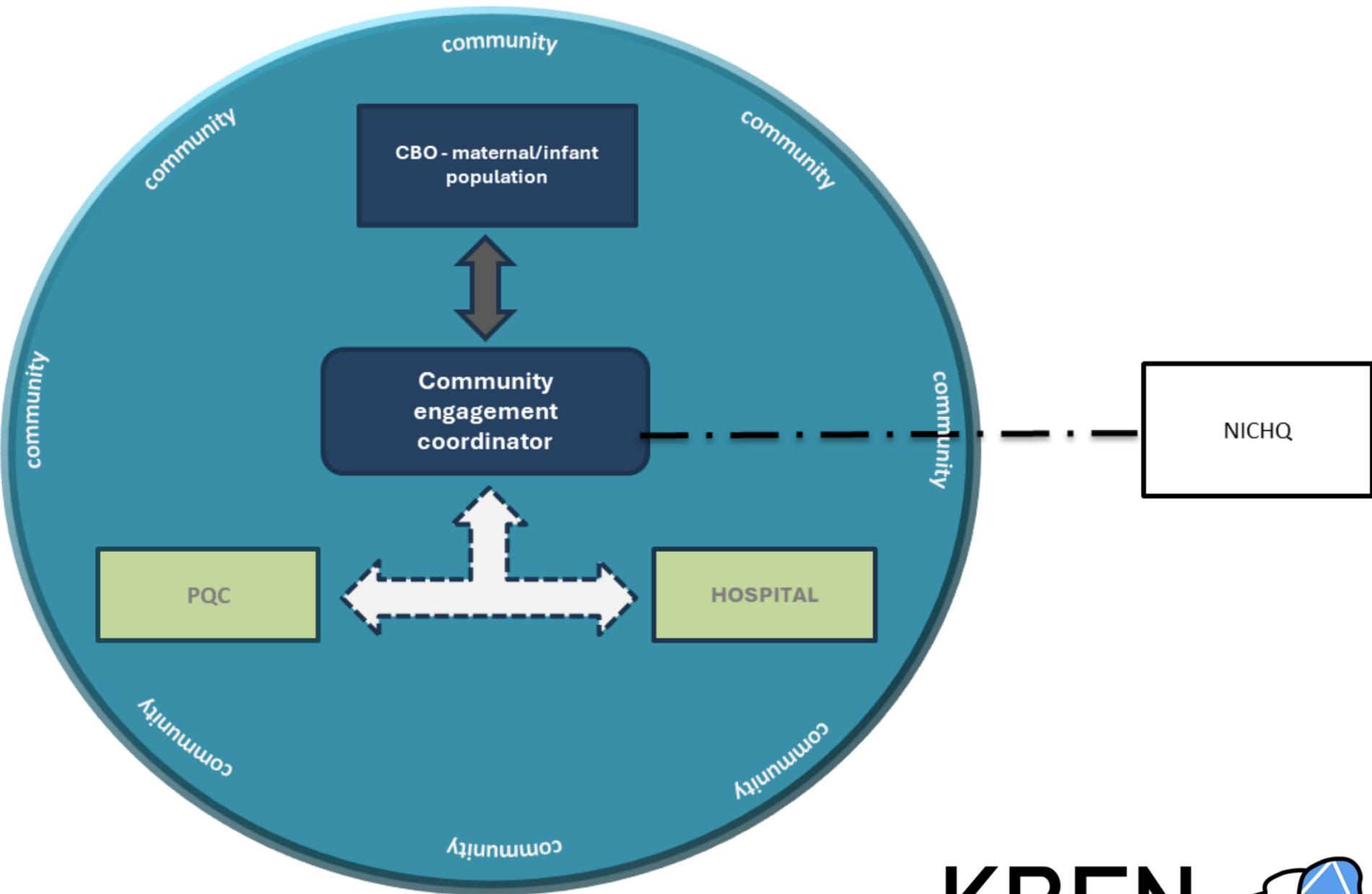
## *CCHI Vision*

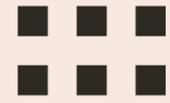


We envision a world where every community, filled with realized power, leads transformative efforts that achieve optimal health for families.



# Framework-Communities Lead Collaborative Efforts





# The *Community* in CCHI



six dimensions





# WHO WE ARE

Six Dimensions is a woman led, Mississippi-based nonprofit organization focused on improving maternal health outcomes.

Established in 2016, but in 2023, we made the transition to nonprofit organization from for profit in order to better serve our community.



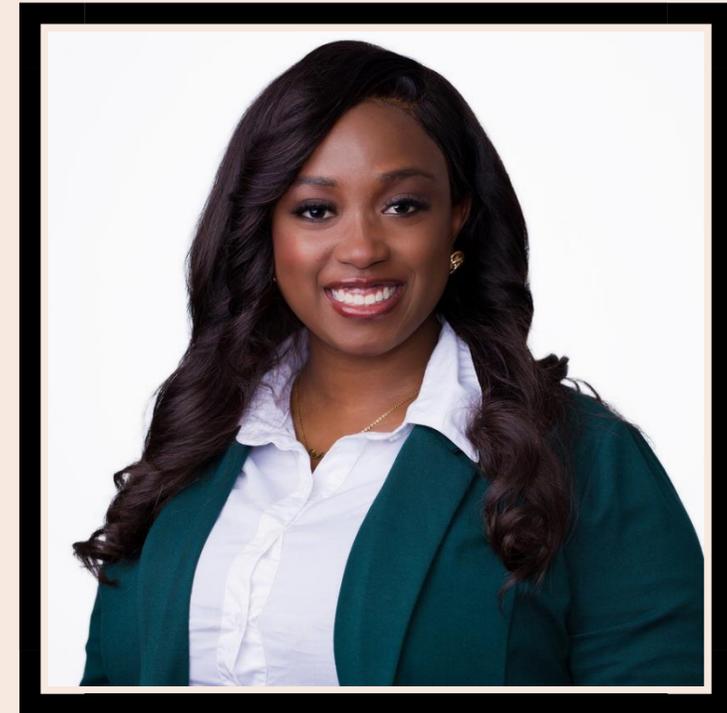
# OUR TEAM



**Nakeitra L. Burse, DrPH, CHES**  
Founder | Executive Director



**Asia Rush, MPH, CHES**  
Program Manager



**Chelsie Dorsey**  
Outreach & Advocacy  
Coordinator

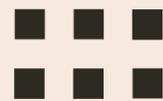


# OUR MISSION

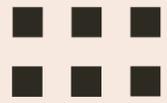
Our mission is to enhance Black maternal health outcomes through:

- Rigorous research
- Comprehensive training
- Proactive outreach, &
- Impactful advocacy

We are dedicated to honoring history, respecting culture, and amplifying the voices of the community as we strive for positive change in maternal healthcare.



# OUR SERVICES



**RESEARCH**



**TRAINING &  
DEVELOPMENT**



**OUTREACH &  
ADVOCACY**

# RESEARCH

Through our research we aim to:

- Bridge the gap between researchers and community
- Support the need for birth workers as part of the maternal health team
- Understand the ongoing and evolving needs of Black mothers in Mississippi
- Collaborate with organizations and institutions on research projects

# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

We do this in three ways:

- An academic course for undergraduate and graduate students, Health & Racial in Maternal Care
- Online & in person professional development
- Organizational capacity building specific to health equity

Current Projects:

- Health & Racial Equity in Maternal Care Training Course
- Birthing Bosses online training for Birth workers
- Emergency Preparedness for Mothers & Families

# Training & Development



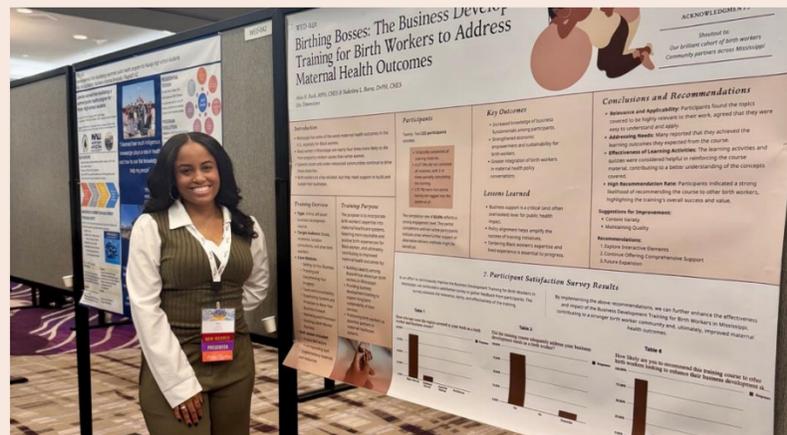
# OUTREACH

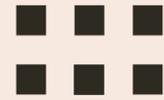
Current Projects:

- Miles For Mama's 5k
- Family Portraits
- Emergency Preparedness
- Maternal Mental Health
- Black Breastfeeding Week
- Community Events
- Laboring with Hope



# OUTREACH





# Miles For Mama's April 2025



# ADVOCACY

Through our advocacy we aim to:

- Advocate for policies that will improve maternal health outcomes
- Engage community members and stakeholders in the advocacy process
- Develop tools and resources to support community and personal advocacy

**OUR MAMAS,  
OUR MISSION**

# ADVOCACY





Support Here

**GHANA**  
September  
2025



# SUPPORT A SISTER

## **SUPPORT ASIA'S JOURNEY:**

Asia has been selected to participate in a service-learning trip to **Ghana**, where she will:

- Engage with local communities
- Explore health systems, &
- Gain insight into the country's history, culture, and impact on the West.

## **YOUR SUPPORT WILL:**

Help cover Asia's **travel, lodging, and program expenses** as she embarks on this journey to strengthen vital partnerships rooted in service, equity, and cultural exchange.

# INTERNATIONAL WORK



# Why CCHI, Why Now?

- Accountability
- Trust in community
- Collaboration
- Centering the experiences & voices of pregnant and parenting families



# Thank You

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Questions?

CONNECT WITH US



[info@sixdims.org](mailto:info@sixdims.org)



[@sixdims](#)



[www.sixdims.org](http://www.sixdims.org)



# Advancing Birth Equity in Ohio

Stacy Scott, PhD, MPA, CSJ



**OCPIM**  
Ohio Collaborative  
to Prevent Infant Mortality

# Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality

**Vision:** Working together to eliminate infant mortality in Ohio.



**Mission:** To eliminate preventable infant mortality and improve the health of all women and birthing persons of childbearing age throughout the state of Ohio through the sharing of best practices, community engagement, and advocacy.

# Who We Are

Members of OCPIM include stakeholder organizations from throughout Ohio that desire to work together on behalf of a common goal: to eliminate infant mortality through interventions based on available evidence and informed by high-quality data.

Membership recruitment is ongoing. We aim to establish diverse partnerships, with a particular emphasis on non-traditional, community-level organizations that can provide a critical perspective on our activities as we work to achieve equity in Ohio's birth outcomes.

# The Purpose of OCPIM

**Purpose:** As a statewide partnership, OCPIM functions as a platform for authentic community engagement, exchange of best practices, data management, and advocacy.

Success is defined by the approved infant health outcomes, driving infant mortality reduction, including extreme preterm birth, sleep-related infant death, and congenital malformations.

# Outcomes: Through partnerships OCPIM has been able to achieve:

## Exchange

- Exchange novel interventions and practices designed to improve birth outcomes in Ohio. This includes successful and unsuccessful practices.

## Optimize

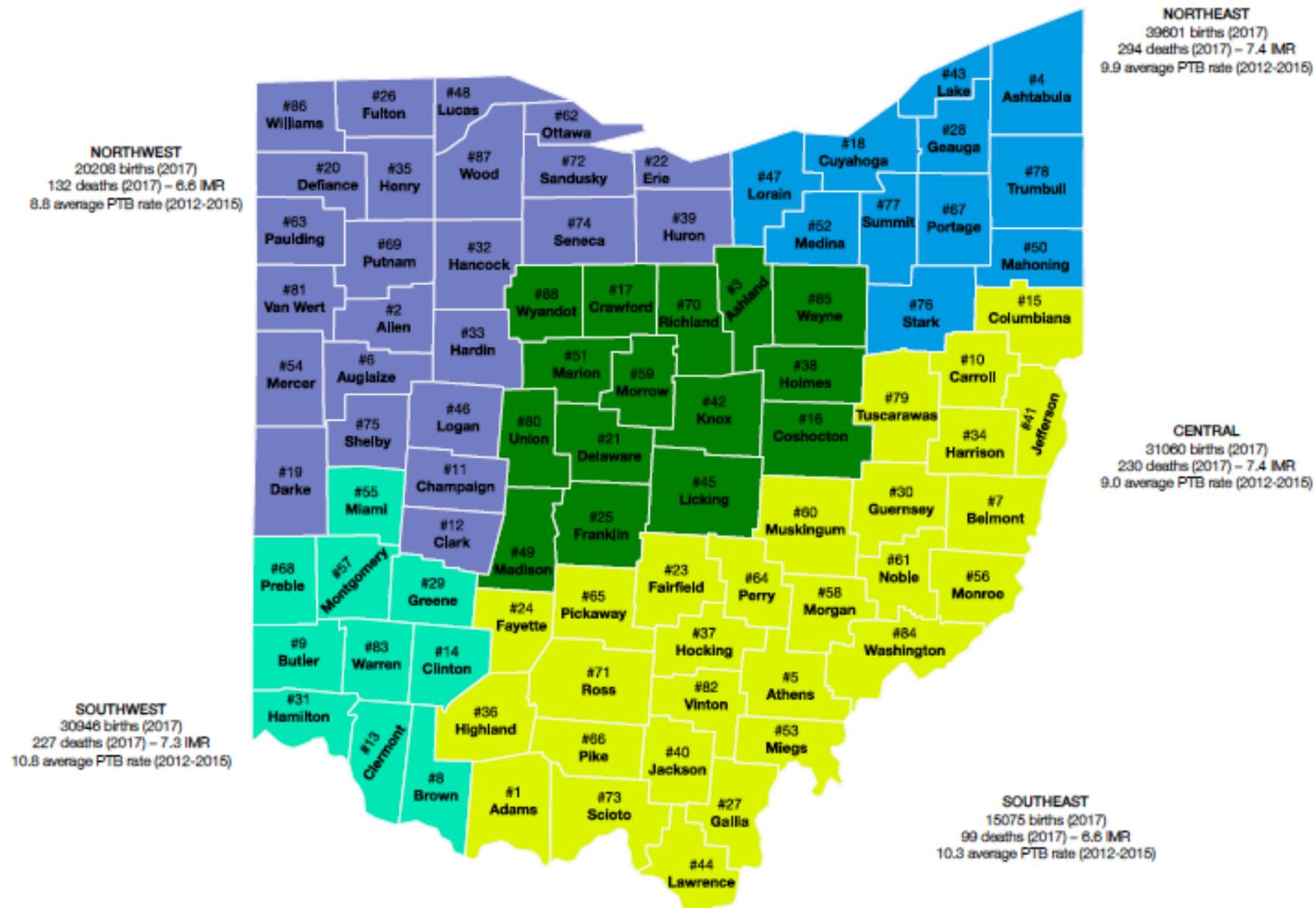
- Optimize the collection, analysis, and dissemination of relevant data among stakeholder organizations.

## Engage

- Engage communities to support those at most risk to experience the direct consequences of infant death and suboptimal birth outcomes.

## Advocate

- Advocate for legislation and policies that optimize women's health, improve birth outcomes, and eliminate preventable infant mortality.



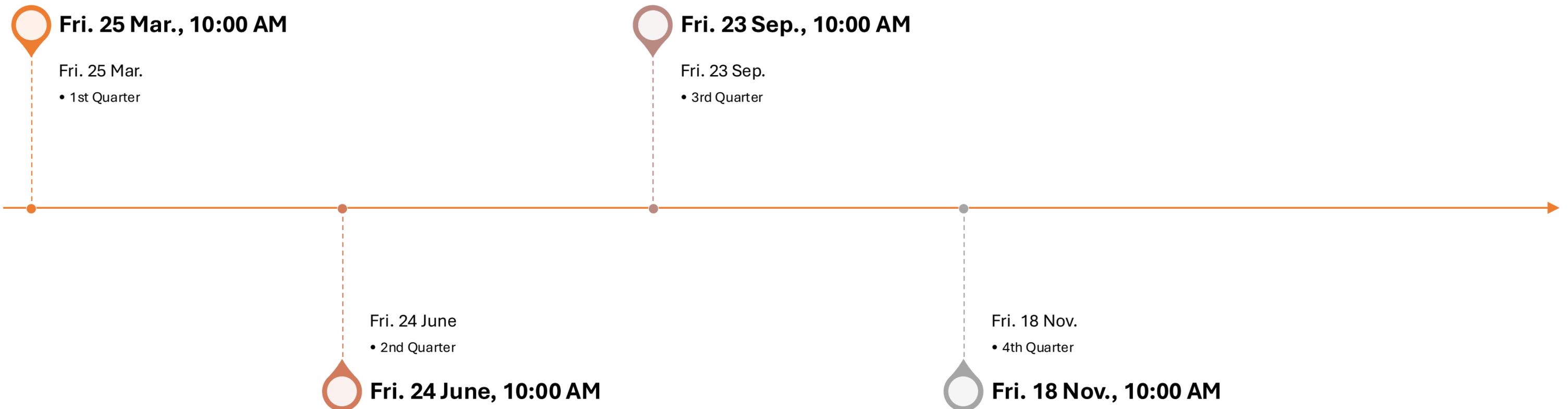
# OCPIM Regionalization

- Northwest
- Northeast
- Central
- Southwest
- Southeast

# Spotlight – Year 2022

The True Essence of a Statewide Collaborative  
What we accomplished together!

# OCPIM Statewide Webinars



# VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

OHIO COMMUNITIES ADDRESSING THE  
IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON  
REPRODUCTIVE AND PERINATAL HEALTH

Our town hall meeting will address vaccination hesitancy among birthing people and focus on the resources available to promote COVID-19 vaccines throughout the state.

Register at [www.baby1stnetwork.org](http://www.baby1stnetwork.org)

# FRIDAY

MARCH 25, 2022  
10:00 AM TO NOON





**OCPIIM**  
Ohio Collaborative  
to Prevent Infant Mortality

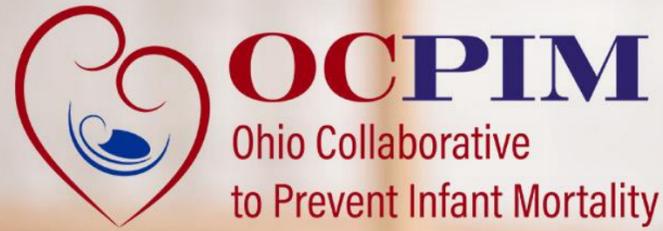
# **VIRTUAL TOWN HALL**

**Advancing Equity: How Can Ohio  
Communities Use Data to Develop  
Solutions and Shift Power?**

**Friday, June 24th**

**10:00 to Noon**





# VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

**The Impact of Infant Loss:**  
Recognizing the Uniqueness  
of Grief and Trauma

**Friday, September 30th**  
10:00 AM Eastern Time (US & Canada)



Register at [www.baby1stnetwork.org](http://www.baby1stnetwork.org)



Department  
of Health

# Community- Based Funding

- The \$250,000 is supporting OCPIM's vision to expand capacity to address both pregnancy and infant - related mortality and morbidity and improve the health of all birthing people of childbearing age in Ohio.
- The collaborative:
  - Expanded capacity through continued incorporation of Ohio's existing maternal - child health institutions, networks, and resources;
  - Facilitated community workshops, trainings, convenings, and activities; implementation of community change agents to increase community member participation and engagement

# Project Objectives

Create equal voice and power for all members of the community.

Acknowledge the history of racism as a foundational concept.

Sustain conversation and engagement to establish trust and progress.

Affirm that community leaders are not a substitute for community members.

Employ meaningful strategies to understand the state of a community.

Incorporate clear accountability and shared understanding around outcomes.

Support and facilitate a continuous process of community engagement that must include strategies for capacity building and sustainability.

# Community Social Justice Improvement Project

- Community Change Agents
- Community Lunch and Learns
- Community Mini-grants (Fire Starter)
- Conducted Statewide Events

A photograph of a baby's hands holding a yellow toy dinosaur over a stack of wrapped gifts. The gifts are wrapped in various patterns: a blue and white checkered pattern, a white pattern with colorful hearts, a white pattern with colorful squares, a white pattern with colorful triangles, and a yellow pattern with white polka dots. The background is a dark, out-of-focus image of a baby's hands holding the yellow toy dinosaur.

**Community  
Events (Safety  
Baby Shower,  
Partner  
Engagement,  
Baby safety  
tailgate event)**

Community Event (Region SE)

Community Event (Region SW)

Community Event (Region Central)

Community Event (Region NE)

Community Event (Region NW)



**INFANT MORTALITY  
SUMMIT 2022**

# Mobilizing Communities, Keeping Ohio Babies Safe

**SAVE THE  
DATE** ➤

**Dec. 2-3, 2022**

Online registration opens Sept. 1



# Tentative **Keynote Speaker**

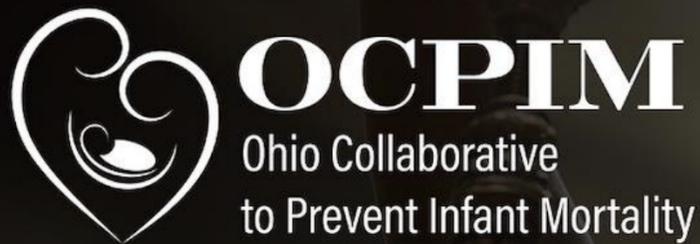
## **Journalist/Author Linda Villarosa**

- Contributing Writer for *The New York Times Magazine* covering race, inequality, and public health
- Former Executive Editor of *Essence Magazine*
- Author of the book, *Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and the Health of Our Nation*



# Spotlight – Year 2025

The True Essence of a Statewide Collaborative  
What we will accomplish together!



# TOWN HALL

# We the People...

Please join OCPIIM's quarterly town hall meeting, where we will address the intersection of politics and public health, a crucial topic, especially in the context of infant mortality work. Addressing the challenges posed by the political climate is essential for creating a future in which infant mortality rates can be significantly reduced.

Register in advance  
for this webinar:

**Jun 6, 2025 10:00 AM Eastern Time**



After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



# 15 Member OCPIM Leader Council

## Navigating today's environment

*A discussion*



**OCPIM**  
Ohio Collaborative  
to Prevent Infant Mortality

Central



David  
Fluellen

Northeast



Dollaine  
Holmes

Northwest



Natalie  
DiPietro  
Mager

Southeast



Barb Gibson

Southwest



Michelle  
Beebe

# We the People...

*A discussion*



**OCPIM**  
Ohio Collaborative  
to Prevent Infant Mortality

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How has your work been impacted over the past few months?

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What strategies are you implementing to navigate these changes or uncertainties?

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How have communities in your region been affected?

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What strategies are they implementing to navigate these changes or uncertainties?

# Communities in Action



# Our Journey Continues.....

[www.OCPIM.org](http://www.OCPIM.org)

Thank You



# Call to Action: Shaping the Future Together

Sharla Smith, BS, MPH, PhD

# What's Next: A Call to Respond

- Kansas is at a pivotal moment for advancing maternal, paternal, and infant health.
- The Kansas Birth Equity Expansion will continue to bring together healthcare providers, community organizations, policymakers, and families to create a unified approach that prioritizes:
  - Defining and promoting positive, dignified birthing experiences for mothers, fathers, and babies, while sharing community success stories to inspire trust, engagement, and improved outcomes.
  - Building and sustaining capacity in funding, resources, and emerging leaders
  - Affirmation of ALL communities
  - Access for ALL to quality maternal and infant care
  - Culturally informed support for diverse communities
  - Evidence-based community centered interventions to improve birth outcomes
  - Sustainable partnerships that strengthen family health systems
- Acting now ensures Kansas can lead in creating healthy, thriving families for generations to come.



# Upcoming Initiatives

- July 31: KBEN New Member Meeting
  - Email [kben@kumc.edu](mailto:kben@kumc.edu) for more information
- August 7: KBEN Networking Meeting
  - KBEN members will receive zoom link by email
- September 11-12: 4th Annual Birth Equity Summit, Kansas City, KS



# Learn More

## Our Team:

- Sharla Smith, PhD, MPH
- Oluoma Obi
- Shea Roy
- Briana Wells
- Daijah Jones
- Claire Metcalf

## Community Leadership:

- Joy Barnes
- Sapphire Garcia

## Fathers' Engagement

### Lead:

- Rev. Tony Carter
- Kyle Ellison

## Join the network:

<https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=C7PAHM8W3P>



**I Want to Join KBEN!**

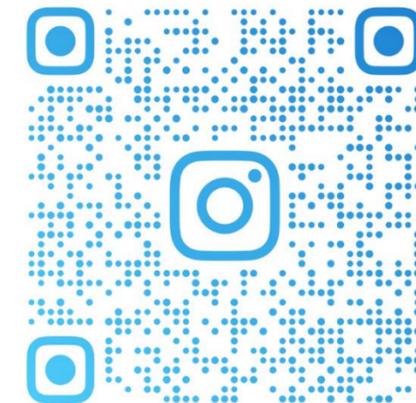
## Website:

<https://www.kumc.edu/school-of-medicine/academics/departments/population-health/research/kansas-birth-equity-network.html>

# Follow Us



**KBEN FACEBOOK**



**KSBIRTHEQUITY**

**KBEN**  
Kansas Birth  
Equity Network



**nichQ**  
National Institute for  
Children's Health Quality



# Audience Q&A

**D'Ondria Mullins**

CCHI Community Engagement Coordinator,  
NICHQ

# Final Remarks & Next Steps

- We'd love your feedback. Please complete the survey!
- Look out for the post-meeting email with slides, recording, and survey.



# Thank You!



[www.tinyurl.com/KSBirthEquity](http://www.tinyurl.com/KSBirthEquity)



[kben@kumc.edu](mailto:kben@kumc.edu)



[@ksbirthequity](https://www.facebook.com/ksbirthequity)



[@ksbirthequity](https://www.instagram.com/ksbirthequity)

**KBEN**

Kansas Birth  
Equity Network



**nich**

National Institute for  
Children's Health Quality

