

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025

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



KBEN

Kansas Birth
Equity Network



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

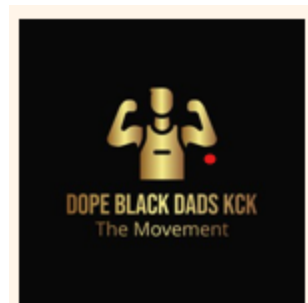
State Town Hall Meeting Overview

- 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





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



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

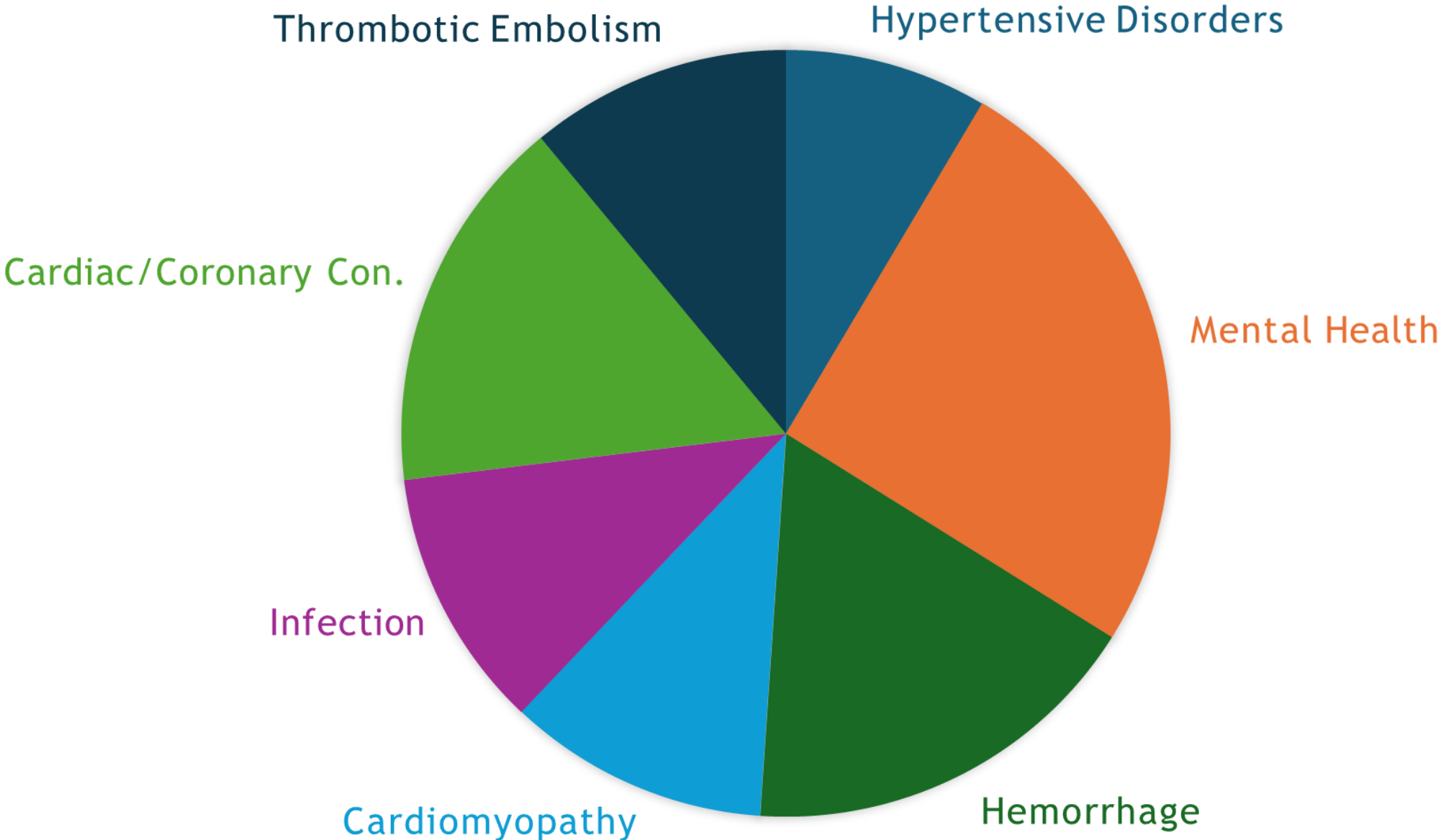


Maternal, Paternal, & Infant Health in Kansas

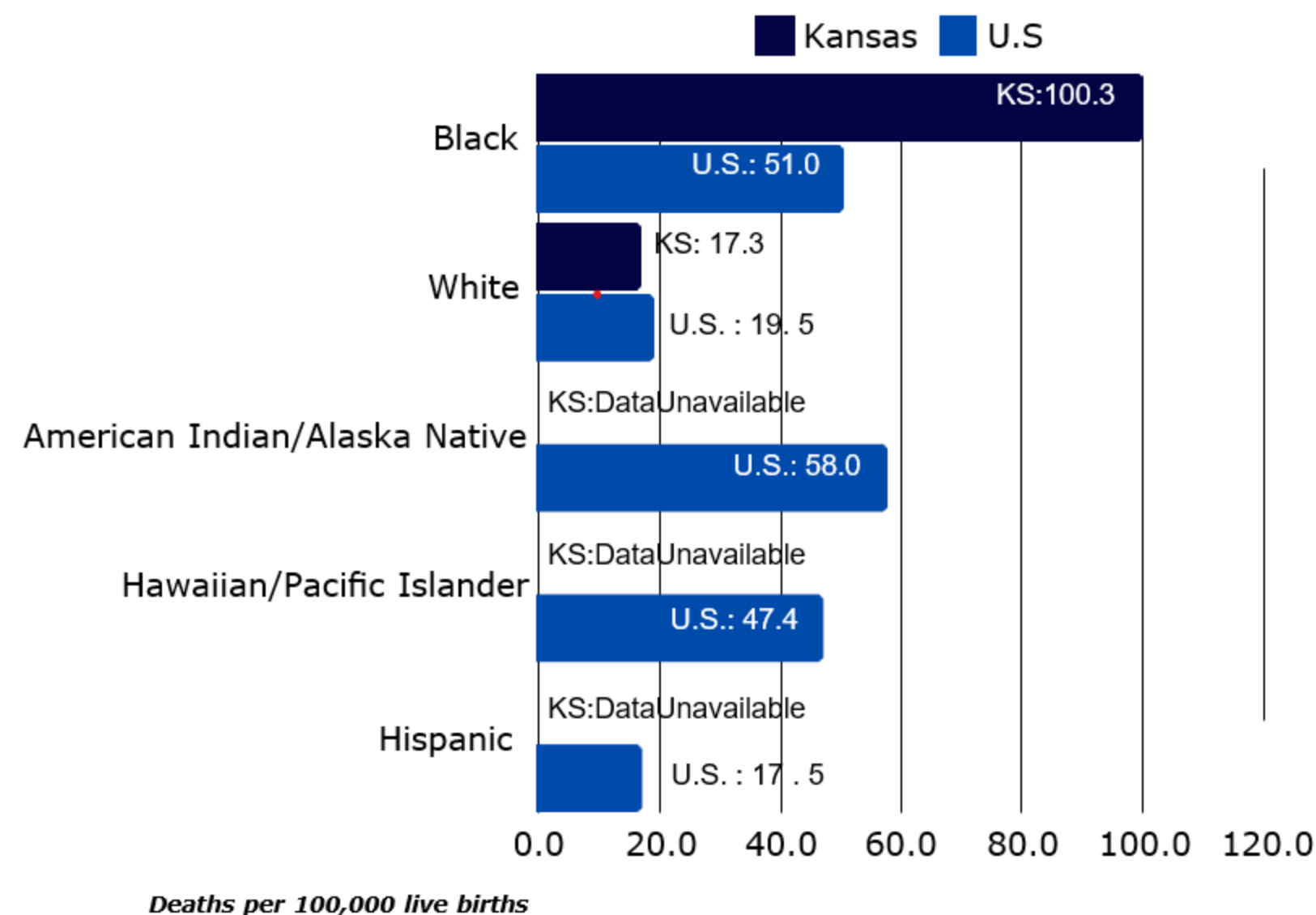
Sharla Smith, BS, MPH, PhD

Causes of Maternal Mortality (2017-2019)

LEADING CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.



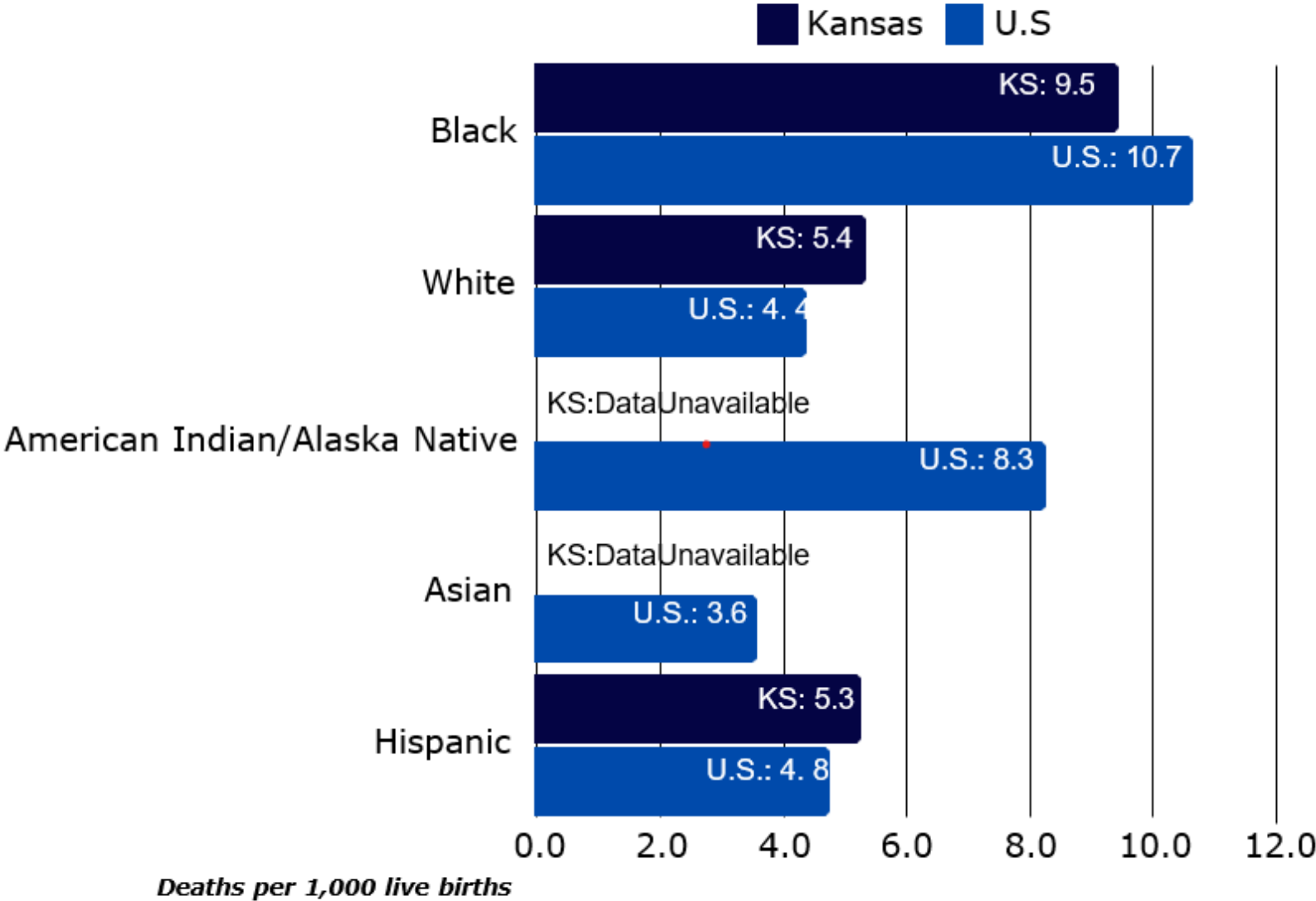
Maternal Mortality : Kansas



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

America'sHealthRankings,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

KBEN
Kansas Birth
Equity Network



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	Storytaylor: 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



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nichQ
National Institute for
Children's Health Quality



The Community in CCHI

Michelle Edison, MPH, MS
CCHI Project Director,
NICHQ

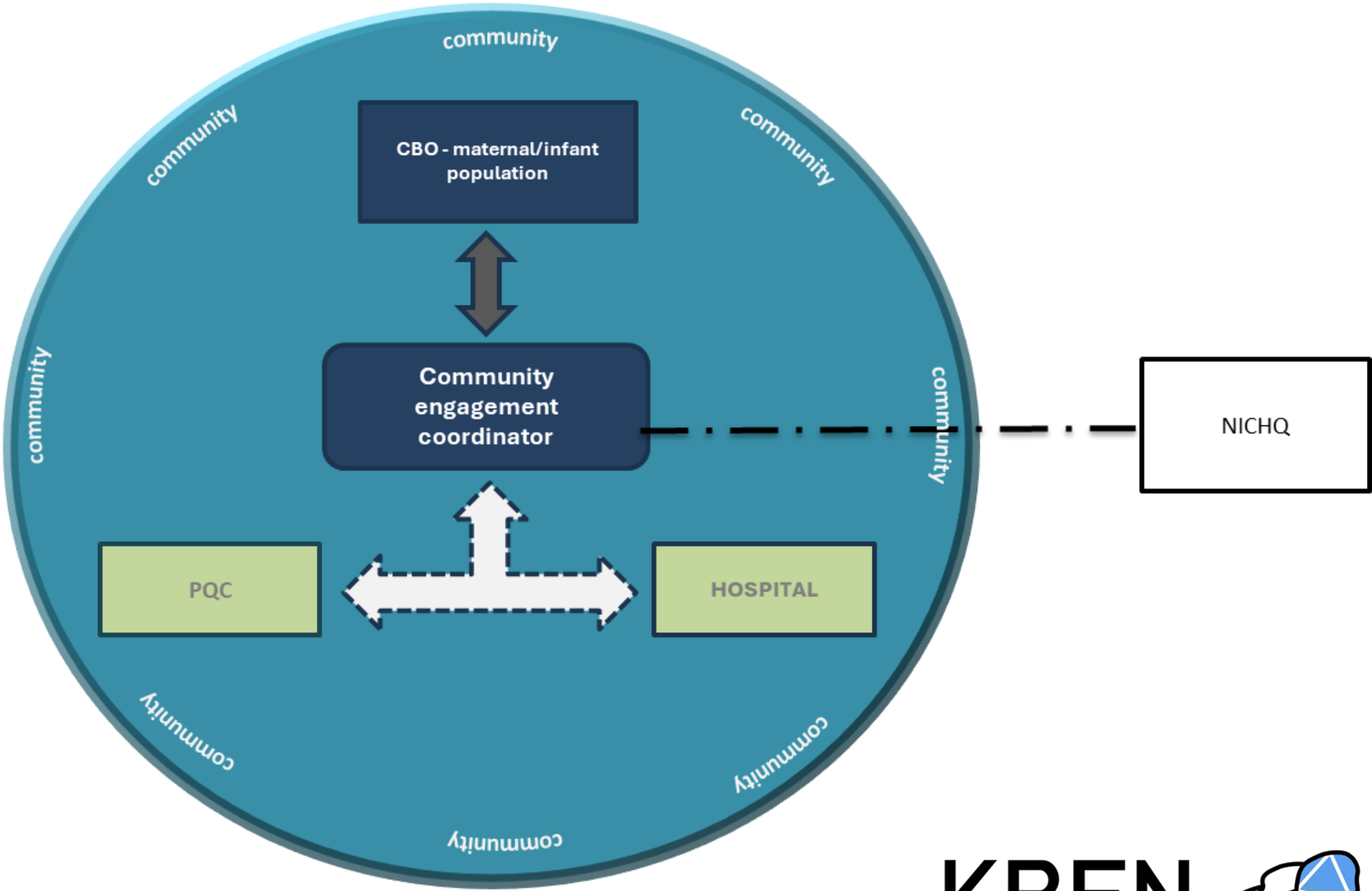
Thinking BIG

CCHI Vision



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

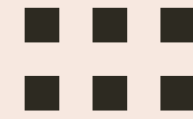
Framework-Communities Lead Collaborative Efforts



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

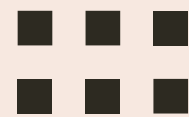


OUR MISSION

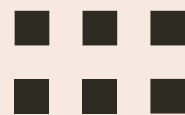
Our mission is to enhance Black maternal health outcomes through:

- 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

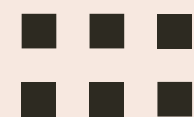
We do this in three ways:

- 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



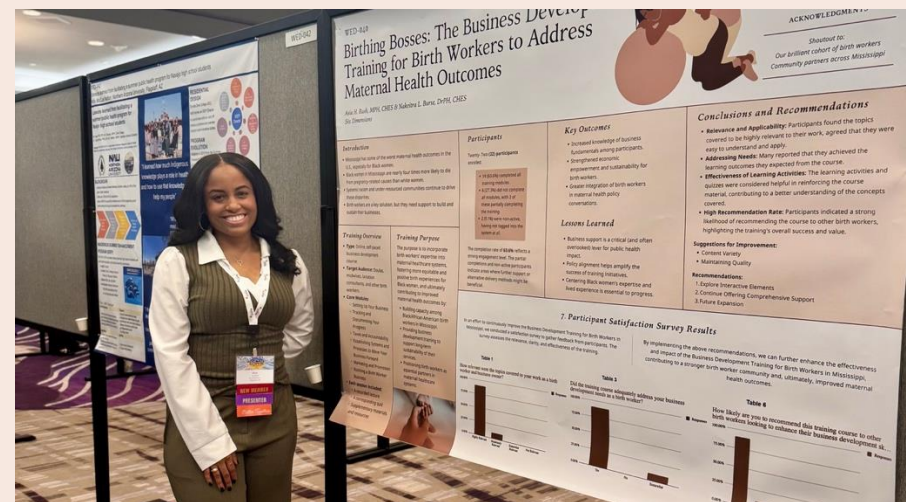
OUTREACH

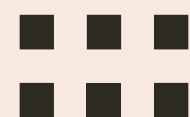
Current Projects:

- 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

SUPPORT A SISTER

GHANA
September
2025



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?

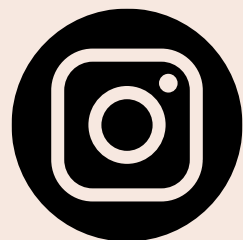
- Accountability
- Trust in community
- Collaboration
- Centering the experiences & voices of pregnant and parenting families



Thank You

Questions?

CONNECT WITH US



info@sixdims.org



@sixdims



www.sixdims.org



Advancing Birth Equity in Ohio

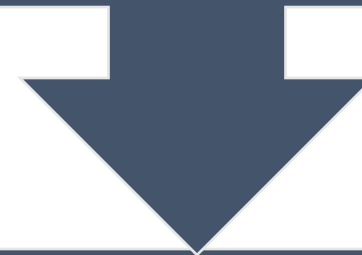
Stacy Scott, PhD, MPA, CSJ



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

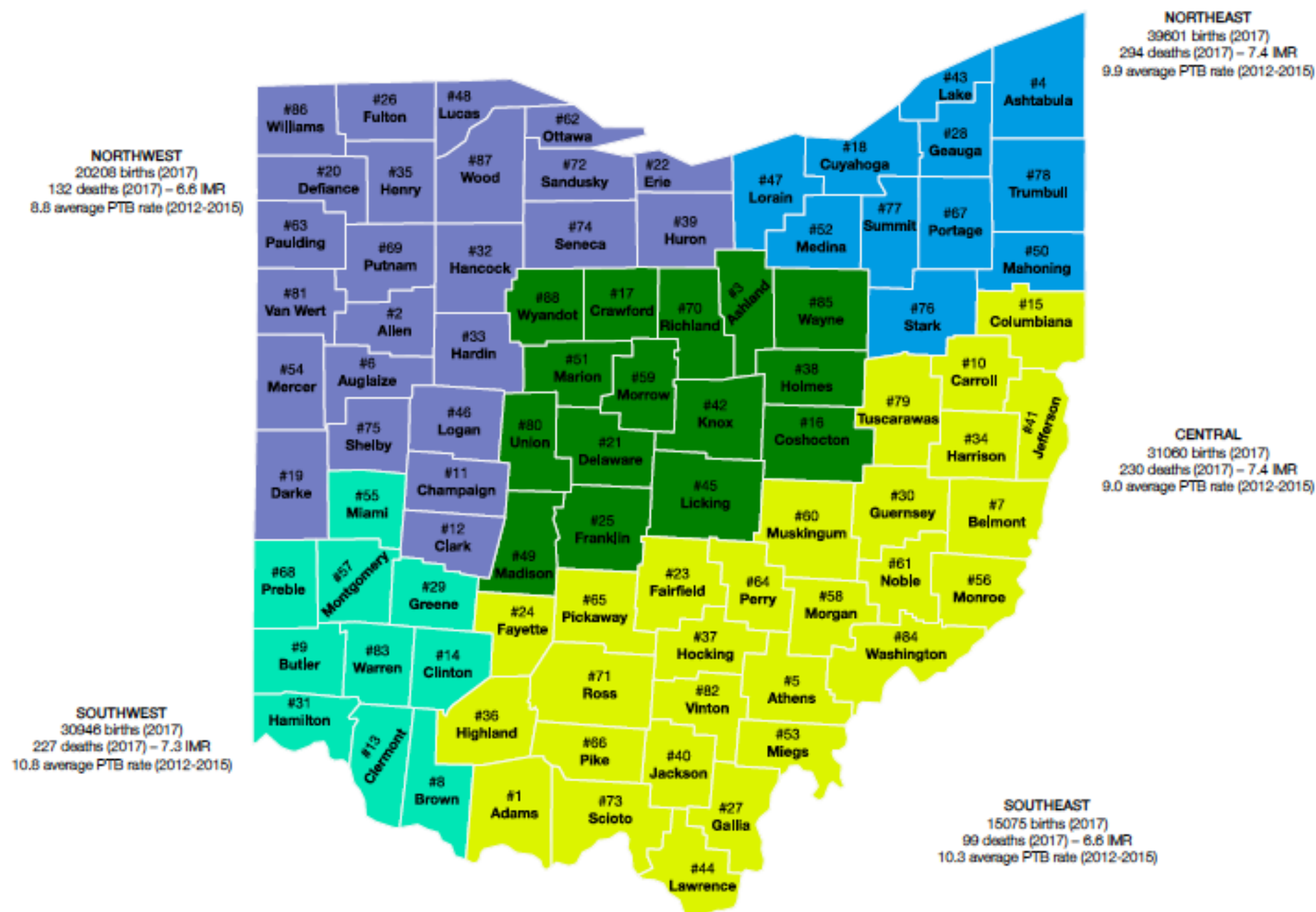
- Optimize the collection, analysis, and dissemination of relevant data among stakeholder organizations.

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.



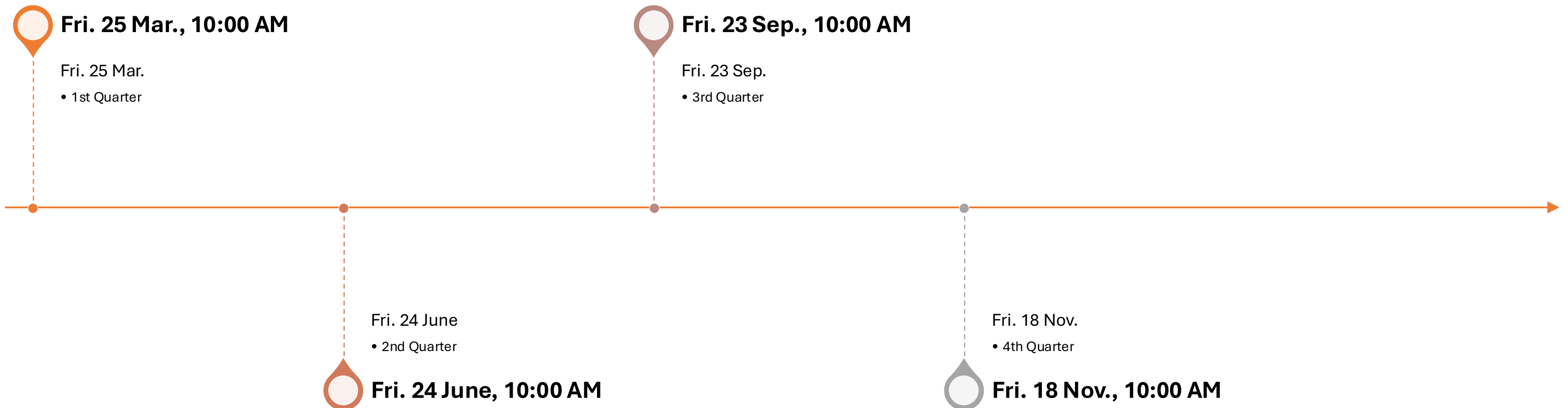
OCPIM Regionalization

- *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

FRIDAY

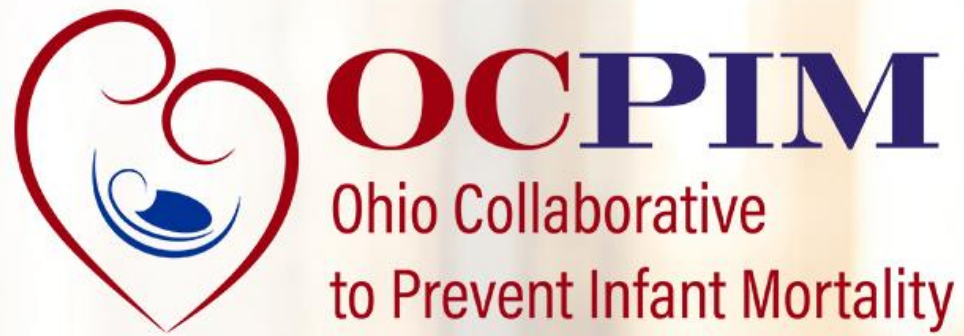
MARCH 25, 2022
10:00 AM TO NOON



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



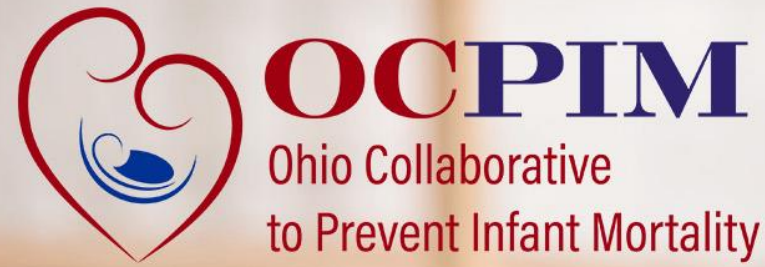


VIRTUAL **TOWN HALL**

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



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 background image showing a baby shower setup. In the foreground, there are several wrapped gifts with various patterns: a red and white geometric pattern, a yellow gift with white polka dots, and a gift with a colorful heart pattern. A yellow rubber duck is perched on top of the heart-patterned gift. In the background, a person's hands are visible, one holding a gift. The entire image has a semi-transparent dark overlay.

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 OCPIM'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

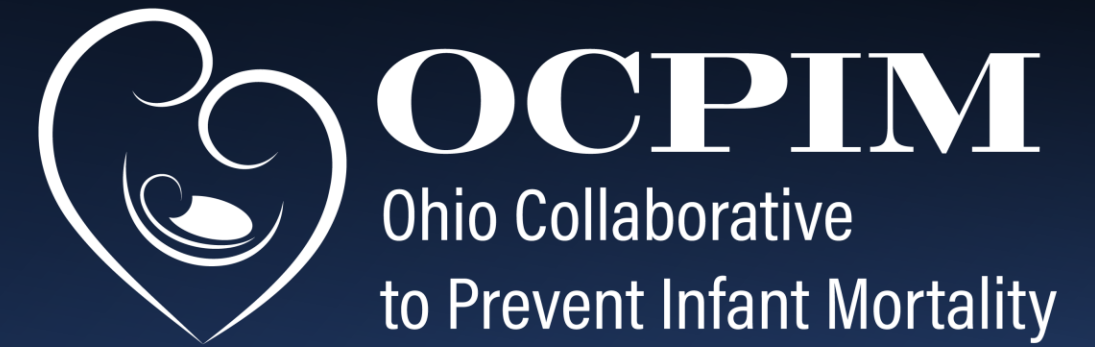
Southwest



Michelle
Beebe

We the People...

A discussion



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

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

How have communities in your region been affected?

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

Communities in Action



Our Journey Continues.....

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 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:

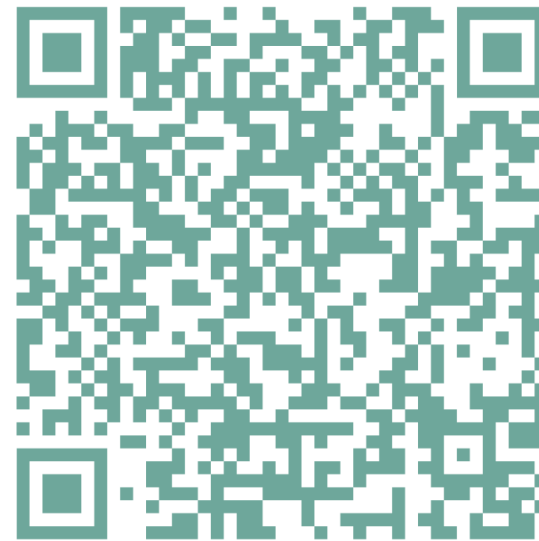
- Joy Barnes
- Sapphire Garcia

Fathers' Engagement Lead:

- Rev. Tony Carter
- Kyle Ellison

Join the network:

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



I Want to Join KBEN!

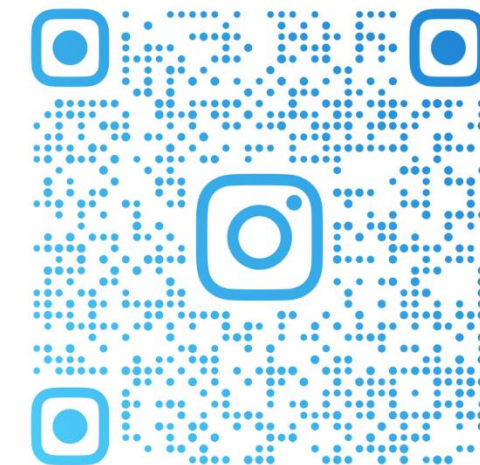
Website:

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

Follow Us



KBEN FACEBOOK



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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



kben@kumc.edu



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



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

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