



**Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans (IMMT)**

December 15, 2020

1:00-3:00 PM

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present**

Richard David  
Angela Ellison  
Shirley Fleming  
Cheryl Floyd  
Catherine Harth  
Stephannie James  
Daniel Johnson  
Virginia Julion  
Jeanine Logan  
Tamela Milan-Alexander  
Pamela Therese Roesch  
Karyn Stewart  
Santina Wheat

**Members Not Present**

LaTanya Law  
Jasmine Martin  
Jerrilyn Pearson  
Debra Wesley  
Cheryle Wolfe

**IDPH**

Nelson Agbodo  
Amanda Bennett  
Cara Bergo  
Kaitlyn Gallagher  
Trishna Harris

Kenya McRae  
Bria Oden  
Alexander Smith

**Guests**

Dara Gray Basley  
Tia Britton  
Paula Brodie  
Glendean Burton  
Samantha Callender  
Christine Emmons  
Rep. Mary Flowers  
Ausannette Garcia-Goyette  
Rep. LaToya Greenwood  
Arden Handler  
Joseph Harrington  
Robin Jones  
Jessica Lamberson  
Ellen Mason  
Cindy Mitchell  
Angelique Mohammad  
Jennie Pinkwater  
Cynthia Price  
Jennifer Seo  
Evonda Thomas Smith  
Lisa Wieczorek

***Virtual Meeting to occur via Cisco WebEx***

**Video Conference:**

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m5aa823ba211e62348d6bfd36c899eb7e>

Access Code: 133 902 4903

Password: iSJ8nR4srp3

**Join by Phone:**

Telephone: (312) 535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago) // (415) 655-0002 US Toll

Event Number (access code): 133 902 4903

## **Call to Order**

The Task Force was called to order at 1:04 pm. Roll was taken, and the agenda approved with one addition to discuss opportunities for the Task Force. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Catherine Harth, seconded by Shirley Fleming, and unanimously approved.

## **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

The Chair and Co-Chair welcomed everyone. The Minutes from the September 20, 2020 Meeting were reviewed. Cheryl Floyd noted a correction in the Minutes to reflect that she was a member and not a guest. Stephannie James made the motion to approve the minutes with the correction, Shirley Flemings seconded it, and the Task Force unanimously approved.

## **IDPH Infant Health Update**

Amanda Bennett, PhD, MPH presented on infant mortality in Illinois. During her presentation, Dr. Bennett mentioned the regional perinatal care and transport policies of the birthing networks to provide the necessary care. She also mentioned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) campaign on "Hear Her" and the patient resources.

Dr. Bennett also shared some data regarding maternity deserts which sparked some discussion regarding the process hospitals must follow to close their obstetric units. Members wanted to know who makes the decision, how the community is informed and what are the notice requirements.

## **Recommendations for the 2020 Report to the General Assembly**

Jessica Lamberson discussed how each subcommittee generated its recommendations to the task force and how they were combined into the six draft recommendations submitted to the overall Task Force. The group then went through each recommendation. There was some discussion of including stronger language in the recommendations such as changing the word "should" to "shall." There were additional suggestions of adding language to the recommendations regarding access to care and telehealth to include infants up to the age of 1 and all women of reproductive age.

## **Public Comment on Recommendations**

There were several suggestions regarding the recommendations. One public member suggested using a different term than "birthing centers." Another member suggested requiring doulas to provide services to families for a specific period of time beyond labor and delivery. Two other members of the public emphasized that MCH funding beyond that of committed from Title V were needed to continue to address the issues of maternal and infant health.

## **Sub-Committee Updates**

The Chair provided a brief update on the activities of the overall task force which included forming subcommittees and meeting with external partners. For 2021, she indicated that the group would take on various activities such as creating bylaws, coordinating efforts with other external groups to leverage expertise and reduce duplication, and continuing to identify gaps in maternal and infant health that need to be addressed.

The chair also acknowledged the challenges of the COVID in communities of color and the redirecting of resources as well the exposure to the virus. She stated that many groups are attempting to address maternal and child health issues during COVID, but more coordination is needed.

Systems Sub-Committee Update: The Chair of the subcommittee indicated that in 2021 they wanted to focus on consistent participation and hoped to get back to face-to-face meetings in the future.

Program and Best Practices Sub-Committee Update: The Chair of the subcommittee noted that despite the subcommittee's had a slow start at the beginning of the year, the group reviewed 14 program and were able to develop a list of key elements necessary for successful program. For 2021, the subcommittee plans to focus on collecting data on doulas and leveraging their expertise to address maternal and infant health.

Community Engagement Sub-Committee Update: The Chair of the subcommittee shared that the group had created a listening guide to engage a cross section of black women in a discussion regarding their "lived" experiences. The subcommittee hopes to begin its Listening Sessions in the beginning of 2021.

### **Next Steps**

The Task Force Chair asked all members to submit any additional comments they had on the recommendations to Kenya by noon on Thursday, December 17, 2020.

### **Adjournment**

With nothing further to discuss, Shirley Fleming made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded by Catherine Harth and the Task Force unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm.