

Maternal Health Improvement Task Force In-Person Meeting

Thursday, June 9, 2022 | 10:00-12:30 PM ET

Howard County Public Library Elkridge Branch

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction of Task Force Members
2. Discussion: Understanding reproductive justice and framing our work
3. Discussion: Revisiting the committee purpose and guiding principles
4. Activity: Exploring the ecosystem of maternal care in Maryland
5. Action items and next steps
6. Adjournment

Notes

Discussion: Understanding reproductive justice and framing our work

After introductions and housekeeping, the group reviewed a definition of [reproductive justice](#) provided by the Co-Chairs, and discussed how this frames the Maternal Health Improvement Task Force (MHITF)'s work. The group observed how this definition of reproductive justice includes not just individuals but sustainable and equitable systems, social settings, and individual bodily autonomy. Several in the group described that this framing was a departure from previous framings of maternal health, with the specific call outs of structural racism and social structures that impact the health of birthing people. The Co-Chairs noted that the MHITF's work may not be able to act or provide recommendations on every level. They also noted that thinking of its work through the lens of reproductive justice can help the task force better understand the intersections between issues and factors including racism that are the root causes of adverse maternal health outcomes, and increase the impact of the MHITF's work.

Discussion: Revisiting the committee purpose and guiding principles

In the discussion regarding the committee purpose and guiding principles, the group noted that the MHITF might consider ways to better engage with community partners, and hope that this group could be a coordinating partner for the many organizations that are engaged in maternal health promotion.

Activity: Exploring the ecosystem of maternal care in Maryland

In the second half of the meeting, the group conducted a mapping activity to understand the types and locations of maternal health services represented by the MHITF members. In the first part of the activity, the group was asked to indicate where their organizations are physically located (see Image 1). Stickers were added for groups in the MHITF who were not present at the meeting. Participants noted that there was heavy clustering of organizations along the I-95 corridor, with gaps in representation in Western Maryland, the Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland (Calvert, St. Mary's, and Charles Counties), and Northern Maryland. Organizations appear to be clustered in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Howard Counties. The group noted that while services may be clustered in

specific areas, there may also be discrepancy in service quality for populations in those areas. There were also 18 statewide organizations. The group discussed how task force membership could better reflect organizations in underrepresented areas, and how the MHITF can utilize its networks to better understand what local health departments and community organizations are doing in maternal health across the state. Participants specifically discussed wanting more data to understand the landscape of maternal health services in Maryland, and potentially develop regional sub groups. The group also discussed potential avenues for task force actions, such as engaging with policy, focusing on school-based services, and exploring intersections with severe maternal morbidity.

Closing

The next meeting is scheduled for July 26, 2022 from 2:30-4:00 pm ET, held virtually. Task force members are asked to come with additional names of those who may not be represented on the MHITF currently.

Action Items

For MHITF Leadership (Co-Chairs and MDH)

- Share resources for further reading on reproductive justice and holistic lens for maternal health in Maryland
- Prepare any statewide and/or jurisdiction level data providing overview of maternal health outcomes and resources, as requested by Chairs

For all

- Further consider areas/locations/groups/maternal health services not currently represented by current MHITF members
- Bring names of at least two individuals who might be a good candidate to join the MHITF to July 26 meeting

Image 1: Map of organization locations on the MHITF

