

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: June 22, 2017

END DATE: June 27, 2017

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RE: Addressing Infant Mortality in Flint and Genesee County

Infant mortality continues to affect too many families in Genesee County. In 2015, 43 babies died before their first birthday. Many of these deaths could have been prevented. The 2015 infant mortality rate in Genesee County was 9.1 per 1,000 live births, which was the 2nd highest in the state of Michigan that year. The average infant mortality rate in Genesee County from 2013-2015 was 8.4, and the rate in the City of Flint was 10.7. There are also racial disparities between white babies and African American babies. The average infant mortality rate from 2013-2015 for whites in Genesee County was 5.6, while 15.6 for African Americans. The same time frame in the City of Flint showed rates of 4.9 for whites and 14.7 for African Americans.

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) is leading a Maternal and Child Health Community Needs Assessment with the newly formed Genesee County Maternal Child Health Network, which is a network of community partners with a passion for improving maternal and child health throughout the county. The purpose of this needs assessment is to better identify gaps, as well as community strengths, assets, and potential resources to address needs. For Genesee County, it is an opportunity to work collaboratively and expand upon previous maternal and child health successes, as well as examine the added risks that the current water crisis has placed upon mothers and their children.

Through this assessment, data is being reviewed about health outcomes and behaviors across the life course and feedback is being gathered from families regarding their experience with maternal and child health. This information will be used to identify strategic issues that, if addressed, would improve health across the life course. The highest priority issues will be identified, and goals, objectives, and strategies will be developed to improve maternal and child health in our community. The information obtained from this assessment will also guide GCHD in its focus on health disparities and their impact on infant mortality.

Further maternal and child health data is currently being reviewed and analyzed by GCHD and the Genesee County Maternal Child Health Network. The coming months will play an important role in the assessment process as priority areas, objectives, goals, and strategies are developed.

While this assessment will conclude in September 2017, the Genesee County Health Department will continue to collaborate with community partners and work towards addressing priority issues such as infant mortality to better the health and well-being of all Genesee County residents. For more infant mortality and maternal child health data, please visit www.gchd.us/resources/data

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