



**Working
Together to
Reduce
Infant Deaths**

**The Cleveland City Council
Health & Human Services
Committee Hearing
October 21, 2019**



THE PROBLEM

High infant mortality rates in Ohio, the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County have been persistent for 50+ years.

In 2015

- Ohio ranked 45th among all states nationally - near bottom for IM
- City of Cleveland – 12.9 IMR was double the national average of 6.0 IMR
- Cuyahoga County – 10.5. IMR compared to national average of 6.0 IMR

THE PROBLEM- SEE FYC StoryBoard

TWO Most Significant Causes of Infant Deaths 2015

87 Infant Deaths
Extreme Prematurity



27 Infant Deaths
PREVENTABLE Sleep-related
Infant Deaths

THE PROBLEM

THERE IS A 40-YEAR SURVIVAL TIME LAG BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK INFANT MORTALITY RATES

1975 Infant Mortality Rates

- **White: 14.3**
- **Black: 25.1** (*in 1975 all non-White births were in one "Other" category*)

2015

Infant Mortality Rates

- **White: 5.8**
- **Black: 15.2**

THE PROBLEM

THINK ABOUT IT

What if Ohio's Black IMR had been the same as Ohio's White IMR from 1990-2015?

5,914

Black babies would not have died.



Organizational Description

- 13-Cuyahoga County civic leaders established First Year Cleveland in December 2015: **Cleveland Mayor and City Council**
- FYC Advisory Council includes over 300 community representatives from more than 70 organizations
- FYC is a collaborative, grassroots effort with a bottom-up approach
- FYC is designed to have a small staff and leverage community assets
- FYC draws on the experience and wisdom of our community
 - Parents and grandparents
 - Neighbors
 - Frontline caregivers
 - Leaders from health systems, civic groups, volunteer organizations, and faith-based community



Structure

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine serves as First Year Cleveland's fiscal agent and provides in-kind support for executive staff leadership and operations, including space.

2016-2019 funders include:

- **City of Cleveland, Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson and Cleveland City Council**
- Cuyahoga County, County Executive Armond Budish and Cuyahoga County Council
- George Gund Foundation
- Mt Sinai Foundation
- Ohio Department of Medicaid
- Ohio Department of Health



FYC STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION + MISSION



Our Vision

Every baby born in Cuyahoga County will celebrate a first birthday

Our Mission

To mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths and racial disparities



TAKEAWAY 1 AND COMMUNITY ACTION MISCONCEPTIONS PREVAIL

Our community must have access to reliable, accurate, real-time infant death data on a regular basis so it has a common understanding of the problem and how to address it.



Babies are dying due to poor or no prenatal care.

Cuyahoga County has the highest rate of prenatal care in the state and the worst IMR.

Poor Black babies are dying, so poverty must be key.

In 2015, 50% of African American babies who died from prematurity and birth defects were on Medicaid and 50% on private insurance.

Babies who are dying are born to teen moms and/or moms who abuse drug and alcohol.

In the past 10 years, less than 4% of all infant deaths were born to teen moms and/or moms with addiction or mental health issues.

TAKEAWAY 1 AND COMMUNITY ACTION MISCONCEPTIONS PREVAIL

First Year Cleveland - Infant Mortality (Short)

Watch later Share

Dr. Arthur James led First Year Cleveland in getting the answers to why so many black babies were dying

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top left is a play button icon. To its right is the video title "First Year Cleveland - Infant Mortality (Short)". Further right are icons for "Watch later" (a clock) and "Share" (an arrow). Below the title is a large, bold text block: "Dr. Arthur James led First Year Cleveland in getting the answers to why so many black babies were dying". At the bottom of the player is a large play button icon. Below the play button is a row of stylized human figures in various colors (orange, blue, purple, red, green, grey, blue, green) representing a diverse group of people. The background is a solid light brown color.

TAKEAWAY 2 AND COMMUNITY ACTION SYSTEMS-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS ARE REQUIRED

FYC must go beyond individual interventions and address systems that are negatively impacting maternal and child health outcomes.

“While the mother is the environment of the developing fetus, the community is the environment of the mother.”

- Dr. Lawrence Wallack, “Going Upstream for the Health of the Next Generation”

"When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower."

Alexander Den Heijer (Quote used with permission from Mariela Uribe)

Reduce Racial Disparities 2020 GOALS

By the end of 2020, our community will reduce the baseline African American to Caucasian infant death disparity rate of 6.7 by 50 percent. This will be accomplished through an action plan addressing structural racism. The plan will be developed through a better understanding of the roles race and maternal stress play in infant deaths and learning from families who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss. Our community is striving with urgency that there be no racial disparities in infant deaths by 2025.

Action Team 1: Launch a system-wide roundtable to execute an awareness campaign and employee training campaign to address biases in the workplace that are negatively impacting maternal and child health outcomes (include leaders and Diversity and Inclusion Officers from health, education, employment, housing and public safety).

Action Team 2: Gain a further understanding from African American families that have experienced a loss.

Action Team 3: Lead research efforts to better understand the roles race and maternal stress play in infant deaths.

Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew,
University Hospitals, and
Adrienne M. Crawford Fletcher, CWRU
Funded: \$197,170

Sabrina Roberts, Cuyahoga County, and
Tracy Carter, The MetroHealth System
Funded: \$405,000

Angela Neal Barnett, Kent State University,
and Christin Farmer,
Birthing Beautiful Communities
Funded: \$10,000

FYC Action Team 2: Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Committee

Our Mission:

To provide awareness, support, and hope to those who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or the loss of a baby before the age of one.

Our Vision:

Provide every person who experiences pregnancy and infant loss with timely, accessible and culturally relevant services.

**It is our honor to support families of our precious
Ebony Butterflies**

www.PAILConnect.org



**PREGNANCY AND
INFANT LOSS**

Hope is Here. We are Here.

FYC Action Team 2: Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Committee

Community Engagement and Outreach

- Black Infant Loss Society
- Remembrance Events – Wave of Light
- Pregnancy & Infant Loss Community-Based Research Study
- Memorial Gardens

Grief Healing Support & Capacity Building

- Individual & Group Counseling
- Grief Recovery Network
- Grief Resource Guide
- Education & Training for Clinicians

FYC Action Team 2: Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Committee

Toxic: A Black Woman's Story



- Partnership with Healthy Cleveland's Healthy Neighborhoods Committee.
- Focuses on the impact of racism and stress on African American maternal and child health outcomes.
- Partnered with National Geographic to create film discussion guide.
- Community Film Screening (November 2019)

TAKE AWAY 3 AND COMMUNITY ACTION STRUCTURAL RACISM MATTERS

~~Race matters~~ Structural Racism matters

87% of the United States history and experience has been under slavery and

Jim Crow

African American Citizenship Status: 1619-2017

Time Span	Status	Years	% U.S. Experience
1619-1865	Slaves "Chattel"	246	62%
1865-1964	Jim Crow virtually no Citizenship rights	99	25.0%
1964-2017*	"Equal"	53	13%
1619-2017	"Struggle" "Unfairness"	398	100%

Source: Art James

BUILDING PUBLIC WILL AND ADVANCING PUBLIC POLICY IS KEY TO FYC COLLECTIVE WORK

FYC Community Engagement and Public Policy Committee is Co-Chaired by Chief Walker Minor and Marcia Egbert, Senior Program Officer, George Gund Foundation

Strategic Plan Priorities Include:

- 1. Engage Local Policy Makers to Act**
- 2. Engage State Policy Makers to Act**
- 3. Lead Policy Efforts in Social Determinants of Health within FYC priority areas including Housing, Medicaid & Paid Family and Medical Leave**
- 4. Support and Align with Organizations that are also working on Infant Mortality**
- 5. Involve Residents to Activate a Community Movement to Reduce Infant**

FYC PROGRESS

CUYAHOGA COUNTY 2015 IMR = 10.51
CUYAHOGA COUNTY 2018 Preliminary IMR= 8.6*

CLEVELAND 2015 IMR= 16.68
CLEVELAND 2018 IMR= 14.70*

**TOGETHER WE HAVE SAVED SEVERAL KINDERGARTEN CLASSES OF
BABIES**

But we have a long way to go to get to 6.0 IMR by end of 2020

NEXT STEPS & YOU CAN ACT NOW

Continue to Invest Time, Talent & Treasure to First Year Cleveland. Your investment will go towards:

- **11 FYC Actions Teams — see handout**
- **Systems-wide Structural Racism Initiatives** including biases testing and training for all level of employees in the systems that impact maternal and child health outcomes.
- Join FYC in showing **“Toxic: A Black Woman’s Story.”**
- Lead further discussion on **racism being a public health crisis.**
See Milwaukee Resolution in your folders.
- **FYC Community Movements for Safe Sleep**
- Creating a **“No Wrong Door” Seamless Delivery System** among community providers, healthcare systems and public health



THANK YOU & CONTACT INFORMATION



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