

Narrative Development
Healthy Mothers, Healthy
Babies, Healthy Society

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Dominant Health Narrative

- Health is an Individual Responsibility
- Competition and Consumer Choice are important in healthcare
- Anyone Can Choose To Be Healthy – Personal Choices are the Major Determinant of Health
- The healthcare sector is responsible for health
- Medical Care Will Cure/Fix Me if I Get Sick or Injured
- Health is a Private Matter

Alternative Health Narrative

- Health is a collective/community responsibility
- Health is a right and a community good
- Health equity and historical trauma are a present challenge
- Balanced investment in medical care and public health
- Health in all policies – health is not just the responsibility of the healthcare sector
- Government's role is to protect and advance the public good

Dominant narrative re Mothers and Infants

- Parents are solely responsible for their children.
- Private sector and “markets” will meet the needs of children.
- Education starts at kindergarten
- Disparities are due to parental inadequacies
- Medical care will cure us if we get sick.
- Parents know what’s best for their family and they alone get to decide what happens with their children.
- Health is a private matter

Alternative Narrative re Mothers and Infants

- Child rearing is a family and community (supportive) responsibility
- Parenting/grandparenting is vital work
- The long-term vitality of our society requires broad community investment and prioritization in children.
- Education of an individual begins prenatally. Education is transgenerational.
- Some families have been structurally disadvantaged and need additional supports.
- “Belonging” is a more powerful force than technology.
- Children are a “community good” and require public support.

HHS Actions to Improve Maternal Health Outcomes

- Propose the establishment of a proposal to identify “Birthing-Friendly” hospitals designation
- Guidance on Medicaid postpartum coverage to state health officials - PDF
- 720,000 more people could gain full-year postpartum coverage with state action
- Expand Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program
- NIH Decoding Maternal Morbidity Data Challenge
- NIH Technology Accelerator Challenge (NTAC) for Maternal Health
- Hypertension Innovator Award Competition Phase 1
- Racial Equity in Postpartum Care Challenge

1. WHY are Black people experiencing higher rates of maternal mortality?

- Eclampsia/preeclampsia (PEC)
- Postpartum cardiomyopathy (CV)
- Obstetric (OB) embolism

2. WHY do Black pregnant and birthing people have higher death rates of from PEC, CV, OB embolism (despite being 60%–70% preventable)?

- Increased co-morbidities and stress
- Delays in reaching and accessing care and diagnosis
- More severe symptoms and more advanced disease

3. WHY do Black pregnant and birthing people not receive risk appropriate care based on standards?

- Less access to care overall (including primary care)
- Concentrated use of hospitals with poorer quality indicators
- Not listened to by providers

4. WHY do these factors (decreased access, etc.) disproportionately affect Black birthing people?

- Structural/internalized racism - intersectionality
- Residential segregation - access to poorer quality hospitals, insurance coverage disparities
- Implicit and explicit bias of providers
- Disproportionate impact of social determinants of health (SDOH)

5. Why?

- Legacy of systemic racism, hierarchy of human value entrenched in policies and practices affecting health and health care

Changing the Narrative and Accelerating Action to Reduce Racial Inequities in Maternal Mortality

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MANAGEMENT OF RISKS & DISEASES

Charity narrative

World of Providing...

- Health education
- Screening tests
- Disease management
- Pharmaceuticals
- Clinical services
- Physical and financial access - insurance

DEMOCRATIC SELF GOVERNANCE

Social Justice narrative

World of Transforming...

- Deprivation
- Dependency
- Violence
- Disconnection
- Environmental decay
- Stress
- Insecurity

Focused on Improving Living Conditions

By Strengthening ...

- Democracy
- Mutual accountability
- Leaders and institutions
- Plurality (including workforce)
- Freedom
- Foresight and precaution
- The meaning of work