

From: **David C. Rose, MD, MBA, FAAP, Chair, State Health Commissioner's Advisory Council on Health Disparity & Health Equity (ACHDHE), Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**  
Date: January 9, 2024

Subject: **ACHDHE Recommendations for Program Enhancement:**

In response to the October 10, 2023, presentation on "Virginia Maternal Mortality Programs, Funding and Data Overview" presented to the ACHDHE by **Dr. Melanie J. Rouse**, Maternal Mortality Programs Manager, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, VDH, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) enhances data dissemination and discourse on maternal mortality by engaging various sectors, including law enforcement, educational institutions, health departments, faith-based organizations, and nonprofits through structured conversations and conferences.
- The Virginia Department of Health actively encourage collaborative efforts among localities involving healthcare providers, social services, libraries, mental health organizations, and insurance entities. This initiative aims to utilize data effectively, facilitating the creation and implementation of evidence-based intervention strategies and outcome measures for maternal mortality.
- The Virginia Department of Health adopts a mechanism to ensure data accessibility at both local and county levels, incorporating rates categorized by disabilities. This mechanism will not only enhance the precision of interventions but also contribute to the overall effectiveness of maternal mortality initiatives by promoting a data-driven approach and tailored interventions to specific needs, ultimately reducing current rates.
- The Virginia Department of Health develops a follow-up process for ACHDHE recommendations that includes tracking and the implementation of recommended measures. This approach, focused on accountability, upholds expectations related to the adaptation of recommendations, contributing to a comprehensive approach to reducing maternal mortality.

In response to the October 10, 2023, presentation on "Maternal Health Initiatives to Address Maternal Mortality" presented to the ACHDHE by **Cindy deSa**, MCH -Title V Director, and **Lauren Kozlowski**, Maternal and Infant Health Consultant, VDH, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- The Virginia Department of Health promotes early childhood intervention by raising community awareness, forming partnerships with the Department of Education, and offering funding opportunities to diverse grassroots nonprofit organizations.
- The Virginia Department of Health guides local health departments in developing 20-year funding data for public health programs, adjusting for inflation. This supports VDH's role as the primary healthcare provider in underserved communities, aligning with the goal of achieving health equity.
- The Virginia Department of Health adopts the use of Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) as a tool for measuring income and living wage in lieu of the federal poverty level. This adjustment will enhance the accuracy of qualifying individuals for programs, providing a more nuanced understanding of financial need. (<https://www.unitedforalice.org/wage-tool>).
- The Virginia Department of Health considers categorizing pregnancies among Black individuals as "high risk," irrespective of income and other social factors. This approach acknowledges and addresses potential health disparities, contributing to a more proactive and equitable provision of care during pregnancy.

Signed: David C. Rose

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