

# January

## National Birth Defects Awareness Month

January is the month to raise awareness about birth defects and focus on improving the health of people living with these conditions. Birth defects are common, and about 120,000 babies are affected each year.

Birth defects can occur during any stage of pregnancy. Some things that might increase the chances of having a baby with birth defects include:

- Smoking, drinking, and taking drugs.
- Having certain infections during pregnancy, such as Zika virus.
- Having nutritional deficiencies.
- Having a family history of birth defects.
- Being an older mother (the risk increases with age.)



## Screening

The California Newborn Screening (NBS) Program is a public health program that screens all babies for many serious but treatable genetic disorders.

Pregnancy screening is essential for detecting specific disorders early on. You are able to prepare if your baby is likely to need extra care and support. Types of screening include blood tests, prenatal DNA screening, and ultrasounds.

[Click here to learn more about the NBS program](#)



## Preventing Birth Defects

- Take 400 to 1,000 mcg of folic acid daily.
- Avoid alcohol, smoking, and taking drugs.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Maintain control of your diabetes.
- Prevent infections.
- Talk to your primary care doctor.



## American Heart Month

This month is the time to focus on understanding, preventing, and treating heart disease. Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States (U.S.) Each year, about 700 women in the U.S. die from pregnancy-related problems, and more than 50,000 women have life-threatening pregnancy complications.

Women with heart conditions can have healthy pregnancies, but pregnancy can stress the heart and may increase the risk of severe illness. There are many steps before, during, and after pregnancy to help your heart health.



## Risk Factors for Pregnancy-Related Heart Problems

- Being 40 or older
- Being overweight
- Getting little physical activity
- Using drugs
- Drinking alcohol
- Smoking and vaping
- Having an existing heart disease
- Having an existing health condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure



## Common Types of Heart Disease in Women

**Coronary artery disease** occurs when plaque surrounds the walls of arteries that supply blood to your body.

**Arrhythmia** occurs when your heart beats too slow, fast, or irregularly.

**Heart failure** occurs when your heart is too weak to pump enough blood to support your organs and body.



## Steps to Manage Your Heart Health

- Understand your risk.
- Consult your doctor about your risk.
- Develop heart-healthy habits.
  - Exercise regularly.
  - Managing stress.
  - Getting enough sleep.
- Watch for warning signs of problems during and after pregnancy.



## World Obesity Day – March 4

Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. Several factors contribute to high obesity rates, such as behavior, genetics, access to healthy foods, safe places for physical activity, and the overall environment.

Obesity during pregnancy can put you at risk for:

- Preeclampsia
- Gestational diabetes
- Sleep apnea
- Miscarriages



## Maintaining Pregnancy Weight

- Know your caloric needs during each trimester.
- Work with your healthcare provider on your weight goals throughout your pregnancy.
- Track your pregnancy weight at the beginning and regularly throughout pregnancy.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Limit added sugars and solid fats in drinks, fast food, and fatty meats.
- Work to maintain moderate physical activity of at least 150 minutes per week (2.5 hours).

[Read more about obesity and pregnancy.](#)

## Oral Health and Pregnancy

During pregnancy, it is vital to take care of your oral health. There are many changes to your body when you become pregnant, causing your gums to become red and swollen. Pregnant mothers are more prone to developing cavities, gingivitis, and periodontal (gum) disease.

Oral health should be considered an important part of prenatal care.

[Learn more about oral health and pregnancy.](#)



## Oral Health Day – March 20

Dental hygiene is an essential part of your child's well-being. Cavities are a common chronic disease of childhood, and if left untreated, it can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Bottlemouth syndrome is a form of tooth decay in young children. It is caused by prolonged exposure to milk or sugary liquids.

Here are tips to keep your baby's mouth healthy:

- Schedule regular dental visits.
- Ask about fluoride treatment.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks.
- Regularly brush your child's teeth.

[Learn more about children's oral health](#)

# Doulas and Healthy Pregnancy Outcomes

**Doulas can help make your birth, postpartum, and overall pregnancy experience better.**

## **What is a doula?**

A doula is a trained non-medical professional certified to provide continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to the mother before, during, and shortly after childbirth.

## **What are the benefits of having a doula?**

Women are less likely to have pain medication administered, less likely to have a cesarean birth, and more likely to have a positive childbirth experience. Doulas help families feel supported, easing the stress for the mother during her pregnancy journey.

## **Resources**

**Dona International** [www.dona.org](http://www.dona.org)

**Sankofa Birthworkers Collective of the Inland Empire**  
[www.sankofabirthworkers.com](http://www.sankofabirthworkers.com)



# What is the Title V Needs Assessment?

Title V is a federally funded program, known as Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH), implemented by local health jurisdictions (LHJs) with the goal of improving the health and well-being of mothers, infants, children, and families. A key function of the program is directing a comprehensive needs assessment every five years to analyze data trends and health status indicators in the MCAH population (e.g., adequacy of prenatal care, infant mortality, children living in poverty, adolescent birth rate, and adverse experiences among children and youth with special health care needs). The needs assessment process builds LHJ capacity to monitor and address priority health areas and informs the development of a scope of work that will guide service delivery interventions for the benefit of the many families and communities in the LHJ over the subsequent five-year period.

The most essential feature of the Title V MCAH Needs Assessment is participation and input from you: San Bernardino county residents, stakeholders, community-based agencies, and local healthcare providers. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health MCAH Team is going on the road to meet and listen to you. Please join us to share your ideas about the health needs in your community; the goal is to improve the quality of life for your family, friends, and neighbors. For upcoming dates and locations, please see the Save the Date Announcement below.







## SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for the Title V Needs Assessment and learn about the five-year plan for the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH) programs in San Bernardino County. Share your thoughts and make a difference in the health of families.

**January 24, 2024**

IEHP Community Resource Center  
Victorville

<https://forms.office.com/g/hYVjbQgQQJ>

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**February 28, 2024**

Ontario Health Center  
Ontario

<https://forms.office.com/g/2N3hX6emqK>



## *TAKE A LOOK! Another Opportunity to Connect with MCAH Interventions*

If you are interested in additional ways to be involved with improving the health of the MCAH population, especially communities disproportionately affected by maternal mortality, please consider participation in a focus group supporting the Southern California Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review (SoCal PAMR) project, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (SBCDPH) received an allocation from the state to participate in SoCal PAMR and will collaborate with Los Angeles and Riverside counties in the regional effort. CDPH will partner with the three counties to develop a community engagement plan to:

- Increase transparency of the project's review process and utilization of local data to guide action and policy;
- Prioritize recommendations that reflect community needs;
- Disseminate findings and calls for action to potential implementation partners; and
- Build collaborative partnerships and learning collaboratives to implement recommendations for the prevention of pregnancy-related deaths.

As one of SoCal PAMR's primary components, SBCDPH will conduct initial project focus groups immediately following the upcoming Title V MCAH Needs Assessment sessions. This component will be carried out on the same dates and locations noted on the Save the Date Announcement above, with additional dates and locations to be determined. Keep an eye out for more details from the askMCAH e-mailbox. See you there!

# *Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)*

San Bernardino County has received a state funding allocation to administer the Fetal/Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)+ Program, which reviews the contributing factors related to fetal and infant deaths within the County. FIMR is charged with utilizing quantitative and qualitative fetal/infant mortality data to inform programmatic and engagement strategies in conjunction with community members and partners, to prevent future deaths, as well as improve health and supportive services provided to families. FIMR consists of two distinct, yet complementary units: Case Review Team (CRT) and Community Action Team (CAT). Below, please see the primary functions of the FIMR+ program.

## **CRT Responsibilities**

- Determine the number and types of fetal and infant deaths to be reviewed, including an oversample of Black infant deaths or other population(s) experiencing disparities.
- Obtain fetal and infant death data to select cases for review.
- Abstract information from records provided by reporting sources, including hospitals and providers.
- Maternal interviews; FIMR+ is invested in a renewed emphasis on these important connections for qualitative data.
- Develop summaries for each case.
- Schedule and convene meetings during which each case is reviewed.
- Identify recommendations and results of the CRT process and share them with the CAT.

## **CAT Responsibilities**

- Develop an implementation plan consistent with the recommendations made by the CRT.
- Promote prenatal and postpartum systems improvement by engaging community-based groups; bring the perspective of those with lived experiences to the CAT.
- Ensure the CAT remains reflective of the community.
- Champion culturally affirming interventions that meet the needs of the community.
- Facilitate the provision of grief/bereavement counseling and support services to families experiencing a loss.
- Inform the medical provider and broader community of the need for specific actions through presentations, media events, social media, and written reports.
- Collaborate with the community and medical providers to implement interventions that improve services, resources, and quality of care.
- Enhance the credibility and visibility of issues, including those resulting from racial inequities related to parents, infants, and families.





Infant mortality serves as a measure of a community's general health status as well as its social and economic well-being. During 2021, in San Bernardino County, 154 babies died before reaching their first birthday. While the infant mortality rate in San Bernardino County has remained nearly unchanged since 2017, major disparities persist as Black infants are at three times greater risk of infant death than infants of other races/ethnicities. These disparities highlight key areas of focus for the FIMR program, and after the case review, a broad forum of interested community members/leaders, elected officials, providers, agencies, and advocates (the Community Action Team) make recommendations to prevent future fetal and infant deaths. Together we can build safer, more equitable communities and systems that support healthy pregnancies, allowing all babies to be born, grow, and thrive.

If you are...

- Health professionals
- Parents who have experienced a fetal/infant loss
- Child health organizations
- Faith-based community organizations
- Neighborhood organizations
- Housing and tenants' organizations
- Social services agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Political leadership groups
- Educational organizations
- Local businesses

...we need you on our CAT, and we invite you to participate as a FIMR CAT member by emailing "Add me to the CAT" along with your contact information to [\*\*askMCAH@sbcountry.gov\*\*](mailto:askMCAH@sbcountry.gov). Your participation as a CAT member will help us to better understand how a wide array of local social, economic, public health, educational, environmental, and safety issues relate to the tragedy of fetal and infant loss. The Community Action Team meets monthly; the final meeting schedule for 2024 is being finalized and will be shared soon.



# EASY ACCESS CLINIC

## THE CLINIC IS COMPLETELY FREE TO BOTH INSURED AND UNINSURED INDIVIDUALS!

San Bernardino County  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### EASY ACCESS CLINIC

San Bernardino Health Center  
606 E. Mill St., San Bernardino

Tuesdays from 2 - 6 p.m.

#### Services offered:

- Free STI testing/treatment
- HIV PrEP navigation
- Linkage to care and other resources
- Health education



Walk-ins welcome. For more information,  
call (800) 722-4794.

Condado de San Bernardino  
DEPARTAMENTO DE SALUD PÚBLICA

### CLINICA DE ACCESO RAPIDO

Centro de Salud de San Bernardino  
606 E. Mill St., San Bernardino

Cada martes de 2 - 6 p.m.

#### Servicios ofrecidos:

- Pruebas/tratamientos de ETS gratuitos
- Navegación a la PrEP de VIH
- Vinculación a la atención médica y otros recursos
- Educación sobre la salud



Todos bienvenidos sin cita previa. Para más información,  
llame al (800) 722-4794.

