

Community Health Improvement Workgroup Newsletter

Vol 1, Issue 7

March 2021

March 2021

Addressing Disparities in Maternal and Child Health

One of the two focus areas of the Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for 2019-2021 is addressing disparities in maternal and child health (MCH) outcomes. The CHIP is designed to meet the needs of the population of Monroe County and to address one of the many goals identified in the NYS Prevention Agenda https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2019-2024/. Our MCH goal is “reducing racial, ethnic, economic, and geographic disparities in maternal child health outcomes, and promoting health equity for maternal and child health populations”. We established the Maternal Child Health Advisory Group (MCH-AG) to address this goal and inform the Community Health Improvement Workgroup (CHIW) on issues related to maternal child health. The Maternal Child Health Advisory Group identified three primary underlying drivers of disparities in maternal child health: optimal birth spacing, access to safe and affordable housing, and the elimination of institutional racism. These three focus areas make up the majority of our maternal and child health equity work through 2021.

The Maternal Child Health Advisory Group meets quarterly and met most recently on February 17 of 2021. The group received an update on Roc Family TeleConnects, a pilot program for light touch postpartum telehealth assessments based on the evidence-based Family Connects national model. The Roc Family TeleConnects program is up and running at 3 sites: University of Rochester, Jordan Health, and Rochester Regional Health. The MCH-AG serves as a community-based advisory body for this initiative

Also at the MCH-AG meeting, Stephanie Townsend Ph.D. presented the policy recommendations from the Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) Commission, particularly focusing on the maternal-child health related policy recommendations. The RASE Commission’s recommendations were submitted to County Executive Bello and Mayor Warren at the end of February, and will be released in a comprehensive report in mid-March. The commission had sub-groups reviewing existing policies and drafting recommendations for education, law enforcement, healthcare, business development, housing, human/social services, and several other areas. Dr. Townsend will be presenting the findings and recommendations at UPMC’s Public Health Grand Rounds on March 19th.

The Maternal Child Health Advisory Group and the Community Health Improvement Workgroup will be submitting letters to Rochester City Council, advocating for two housing policies: the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) and Good Cause Eviction policy. Thank you to all the organizations that signed on to these letters, we have great representation across sectors and organizations!

Building Well-Being, Protective Environments and Resilience

Our second priority area of the 2019-2021 Monroe County CHIP centers on improving mental health by focusing in two key areas: building well-being and resilience, and facilitating supportive environments that promote respect and dignity for people of all ages. Improving mental health is another key priority area in the NYS Prevention Agenda.

The CHIW has an ongoing stigma-reduction initiative to create supportive document that shares resources with patients who visit the emergency departments for health issues related to substance use. We are working with the hospital systems, health department, and community members with lived experiences to patient-centered and non-stigmatizing documents through thoughtful language change. Both hospital systems are working on efficient ways to incorporate the documents into existing workflows. The CHIW is also reviewing other existing discharge documents for opportunities for language improvements. Thank you to Anne Kern, Dr. Tisha Smith, and Jason Teller for their ongoing work on this project!

To learn more about these initiatives or any of the CHIW activities, please feel free to contact Rachel_allen1@urmc.rochester.edu.

Events and Announcements

Public Health Grand Rounds

There are a few exciting Public Health Grand Rounds (PHGR) sessions happening in the coming month. On March 19th from 12-1pm Stephanie Townsend, PhD, Director of Research & Analytics, ROC the Future; and member of the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity will be presenting the RASE commission's recommendations. . Then on April 2nd from 12-1pm there will be a panel of experts discussion the housing crisis in Rochester and its impact on health. Registration to both events is required, and links to these and other PHGRs can be found at <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/education/grand-rounds.aspx>.

Webinars

The Hoekelman Center Dyson Day Lecture

The 21st Annual Anne E. Dyson Memorial Grand Rounds will be held March 10th from 8-9AM. The topic is "Rochester Thriving Forward" a conversation to celebrate the resilience of community partners and Hoekelman Center CARE projects with the hosts of the Forward Podcast: Dr. Sarah Collins-McGowan and Dr. Megan Callanan Lasaponara. https://urmc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RJsl_tx-QpmUrK2MHiK-eA

Webinar Series-Turning the Tide: Understanding and Eliminating Minority Health Disparities. This series will be conducted from January to July 2021, hosted by UAlbany, HANYS and other community Partners. The next presentation will be “Serving Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Patients Amid and Beyond COVID-19”. https://www.hanys.org/events/health_equity/register/.

Community Conversations on Cancer: COVID: Shining a Light on Health Disparities. Local Commissioner of Health, Dr. Michael Mendoza will be presenting this webinar on the inequities experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what can be learned from them to improve equity moving forward. He will be joined by Phyllis Jackson, RN, Community Wellness Project Manager with Common Ground Health. The event is March 12th from 11-12pm. Registration: https://rochester.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6g6hZvZwQGyb0uEs2KjN_A.

Grants

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Systems for Action: Systems and Services Research to Build a Culture of Health: Systems for Action is a signature research program of RWJF that builds a Culture of Health by rigorously testing new ways of connecting the nation’s fragmented medical, social, and public health systems. Due Wednesday, June 9th 2021. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/funding-opportunities/2021/systems-for-action-systems-and-services-research-to-build-a-culture-of-health.html>

Data

March is Women’s History Month

RocHealthData has a new blog post on women in building and construction, as March 7-13 is Women in Construction week. Their Map Room also has maps of severe housing problem areas and areas that are heavily cost burdened by housing.

<https://rochealthdata.org/2021/03/03/march-womens-history-is-building-2/>.

What is the CHIW?

The Community Health Improvement Workgroup (CHIW) is a collaborative group that meets monthly to advance the Community Health Improvement Plan's priorities for Monroe County, NY.

Local hospitals (University of Rochester Medical Center's Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital, Rochester Regional Health's Rochester General Hospital and Unity Hospital) and the Monroe County Department of Public Health are committed to working collaboratively with the residents and institutions of Monroe County, to improve the health of our community. Every three years, through a process mandated by the Affordable Care Act, and the New York State Department of Health, non-profit hospitals and the health department conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to determine areas of community health concern. In Monroe County, the Community Health Improvement Workgroup (CHIW) brings together leaders from hospitals, health departments, and community agencies to prioritize community health needs and develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which addresses the needs of our county.

These newsletters will update CHIW members and people on our mailing list about local events, announcements, webinars, and grant opportunities surrounding the Community Health Improvement Plan's goals for 2019-2021. The newsletter will go out around the first week of every month, as a follow up to the previous meeting and including updates in preparation for the upcoming meeting. If you or your organization have any updates, initiatives, or events that you would like to highlight in an upcoming newsletter, please email them to Rachel_allen1@urmc.rochester.edu.

The mission of the CHIW is *"To improve the health and wellness of individuals and families of Monroe County by addressing prioritized needs and inequities through sustainable systems change built on collaboration and supported by shared resources."*

For more information, see <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/health-policy/current-policy-initiatives.aspx>