The Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative (WHBC) is a public health-focused task force that was created in 1996. The goal of WHBC is to work together with the community of Worcester to improve infant health. Previously known as the Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force, WHBC's main focus is to lower infant mortality and premature birth rates in Worcester.

WHBC is funded by a community grant from the March of Dimes, whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.

Infant Mortality In Worcester

Infant Mortality rates (IMR) are higher in Worcester than in Massachusetts and the U.S in general.

- Socioeconomic & racial/ethnic disparities influence this higher IMR
- WHBC used a community engagement model & Project Nhyira Ba to address IMR in Ghanaian population with success
- Alarming rise in infant deaths to Hispanic mothers
- Current work: focused on Latino/Hispanic population in Worcester

March of Dimes Recommendations:

- Infant asleep on back
- Avoid bed-sharing
- Asleep on flat, firm surface
- No toys or objects in sleeping space

Baby Box Movement:

- Temple University Hospital began providing “Baby Boxes” for patients
- Provide safe space for infant sleep
- Potential ideas moving forward

Community Engagement: Worcester Health Fairs

- Beginning this new direction with WHBC, summer goal to engage the Latino Population to see where our resources would be most appreciated
- Community Forum (to come) in September to discuss infant health with community leaders

Community Project: Community Quilt

“How can YOU help a pregnant person?”
We asked members of the community to write on quilt squares to make a community quilt, bringing people together about healthy babies

Next Steps: Centering Pregnancy Study

- Centering Pregnancy: group prenatal care
- Family Health Center Worcester
- Future: chart review, attendance of Centering group sessions, capstone project
- Goal: learn about prenatal care & observe potential relationship between prenatal care & premature birth