Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative: Baby Box Project

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WHBC Background

WHBC is a diverse volunteer group of maternal and child health leaders that work to reduce Worcester’s high infant mortality rate (IMR). There are over 30 different agencies involved with the WHBC. The Baby Box Project represents one of many of the WHBC initiatives.

Infant Mortality - Worcester

Worcester has a higher IMR (unofficial rate of 5.2 per 1000 live births in 2013-15) compared to the rest of MA (4.14 per 1000 live births in 2013).

In addition to an overall higher IMR, significant racial and ethnic disparities in IMR exist in Worcester, and are more severe than disparities in the rest of the state.

- Worcester’s Hispanic IMR has steadily increased since 2010. This is particularly concerning, as this raise is inconsistent with state and national trends.
- Hispanic IMR in Worcester is twice that of MA and during 2013-2015 it surpassed the Black IMR for the first time.

Baby Box Project

All new mothers in Finland receive a box that functions as a safe sleep space, and represents the value that the country places on infant and child health. Finland has a very low IMR of about 2.2 deaths per 1000 live births.

In Finland, every new mother receives a box that serves as a safe sleep space for the baby. This project is by far the most successful in reducing infant mortality in the developed world. The Baby Box Company adopted this model in the US, and currently supplies baby boxes to at least 20 states.

Supply 100 Worcester residents with a baby box, educational videos, and community resources.

2. Engage with Worcester’s Latina mothers

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention at promoting healthy behaviors related to safe sleep, breastfeeding, post partum depression, family planning, and early literacy.

4. Assess the community’s feedback on the usefulness of the baby box project

Methods

Complete pre-survey (6 weeks after delivery)

Complete follow up survey

Watch educational videos on:
- Safe sleep
- Breastfeeding
- Post partum depression
- Family planning
- Early literacy

Data analysis

1. De-identified comparison of health behaviors of women pre and post educational videos

2. Qualitative assessment of usefulness of baby box

Outcome Measures

1. Demographics of participants

2. Comparison of the likelihood of engaging in certain health behaviors before and after intervention and 6 weeks after delivery

- Asking a WIC advisor for help
- Talking to healthcare provider about post partum depression, substance use, and family planning
- Breastfeeding
- Sleeping in same bed as baby
- Sleeping in same room but not bed as baby
- Have baby sleep in baby box

3. Frequency of use of baby box 6 weeks after delivery

Future Goals

1. Distribute remaining boxes and complete statistical analyses on this intervention’s effectiveness

2. Develop a referral system with community organizations so that every newborn without a safe place to sleep has access to a baby box

3. Continue to work with the Latina community in order to further understand the disparity in birth outcomes among Latina women

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References

