Addressing Infant Mortality through Positive Youth Development Opportunities for Adolescent Girls

Preventing infant mortality is a priority in Ohio. Comprehensive positive youth development strategies that address maternal risk factors are needed, not only to promote better outcomes for adolescent girls but also to impact infant mortality.

### THE FACTS ABOUT INFANT MORTALITY

#### In 2016, 1,024 Ohio babies died before their first birthdays.

- Birth defects
- Preterm birth
- Low birth weight
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Pregnancy complications
- Accidents

#### Leading causes of infant deaths

- Birth defects
- Preterm birth
- Low birth weight
- Sudden infant death syndrome
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#### Prevalence of maternal risk factors known to contribute to infant mortality

- **Chronic health issues such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension**
  - 26% of Ohio females (7th–12th grade) are overweight or obese.
  - Only 39% of high school females report being physically active for at least 60 minutes on five or more days a week.
  - Only 20% of high school females report eating five servings of fruits and vegetables per day in the a week.

- **Tobacco and alcohol use**
  - 22% of Ohio adolescents report having used some form of tobacco during the past month.
  - 27% of high school females report having at least one drink of alcohol within the past month.
  - Approximately 76,000 of Ohio adolescents ages 12–17 (8%) report using illicit drugs within the past month.

- **Healthcare utilization**
  - Only 46% of pregnant girls ages 15-17 in Ohio received prenatal care in their first trimester.
  - In 2016, 43% of Ohio Medicaid eligible youth received a well-care visit.

- **Other sociocultural factors such as race, age, poverty, and psychosocial stressors**
  - 25% of Ohio youth are food insecure.
  - 22% of children in Ohio under the age of 18 live in poverty.
  - Of all Ohio births to girls under the age of 20, 63% belong to White Caucasian mothers and 28% belong to African American mothers.
PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

Adolescent girls can make healthy choices both before and during pregnancy:

- Preventing chronic health conditions (obesity, diabetes, hypertension)
- Reaching a healthy weight through proper nutrition and physical activity
- Going to a healthcare provider to receive an annual, preventive well-care visit
- Staying on course to be college and/or career ready

Provide girls with positive youth development (PYD) opportunities:

- Extracurricular activities
- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs
- Faith-based activities
- Sports and recreational activities
- College preparation programs
- Work experiences and internships

How are they connected?

Supporting adolescent girls through positive youth development (PYD) programming is a strategy for reducing risk behavior and promoting health and wellness.