

Strengthening community-based partnerships for maternal health

Identifying and leveraging determinants of community-based partnerships to facilitate delivery of healthy eating and active living programs in home visiting models to prevent chronic disease in mothers.

The Challenge

Mothers face higher risks of chronic disease due to pregnancy, caregiving demands, and limited resources. Community-based home visiting programs can promote healthy living through trusted home visitors. However, addressing social needs like food insecurity and housing instability requires coordination with other community organizations such as schools, hospitals, and food banks.

The Approach

To identify how to facilitate forming, strengthening, and maintaining community-based partnership to address social needs and deliver health programs in home visiting, we are:

- Interviewing home visiting providers to 1) identify key determinants for service coordination, partnerships, and relationships and 2) describe partnership networks.
- Interviewing mothers in home visiting programs to 1) understand experiences navigating community resources for addressing social needs and 2) describe social needs influence engagement with health programs in home visiting.

The Impact

Our goal is to improve the health of parents and children by making sure home visiting programs have strong partnerships with community organizations. These partnerships help families get the resources and information they need to prevent chronic disease.

We will create practical, evidence-based methods that home visiting programs can use to identify what helps or harms their relationships with community partners, build and maintain those relationships over time, and use these strong partnerships to better serve families and support chronic disease prevention.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

The **Partnership Project** resulted in:

- **Improved health behaviors** in physical activity and healthy eating for pregnant women, mothers, and children.
- **Increased family engagement** and retention in home visiting making it easier to meet family social needs (e.g., food insecurity) and deliver health-focused interventions.

Key Benefits

The Partnership Project study resulted in **Community** and **Economic** benefits.



Community

Disease prevention & reduction: Reduce the likelihood that pregnant women, mothers, and children will develop cardiovascular disease. (*Potential*)



Community

Public health practices: Support the ability of home visiting models to meet family social needs and provide content on healthy eating and physical activity. (*Potential*)



Economic

Societal & financial cost of illness: Reduce the need for healthcare costs associated with managing chronic disease over the life course. (*Potential*)

The team:

Our team consists of researchers at the Washington University School of Public Health, leadership and practitioners at the Parents as Teachers National Home Visiting Model, researchers leading the Early Intervention to Promote Cardiovascular Health (ENRICH), and collaborators at other academic institutions providing expertise in study methods.

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