



IAMH Expands Maternal Health Access Through Community Partnerships

The Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health (IAMH) has achieved great success by utilizing partnerships to advance their public health programs, research, and capacity building. A cornerstone of this mission is their Rural Maternal and Obstetrics Strategies Program (MS RMOMS), which uses a community-centered model to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in the Mississippi Delta (MS Delta).

At the heart of this initiative is a network of partners that support women in the MS Delta during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. Specifically, IAMH partners with county health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs),



hospitals, and social service providers to embed patient navigators, community health workers (CHWs), and clinical care coordinators directly within communities.

Through these partnerships, the program addresses gaps in care for Black mothers and families in rural areas. Clinical care coordinators work directly with expectant mothers to identify their needs and provide them with tailored case management. Support can include health education, care navigation, mental health screening, transportation, nutrition, and referrals to critical social services.

IAMH believes in utilizing a community-led approach to addressing issues most important to the community. Partnerships for MS RMOMS were carefully developed through community relationship-building, listening sessions, and shared planning with local agencies. IAMH provided the training, data systems, and coordination, while partners offered trust and connections in the community. This collaborative approach has resulted in increased prenatal care utilization, early postpartum support, and stronger connections between families and local health systems.

Throughout this process, IAMH has learned that it is important to keep partners engaged through transparency and communication. “In order to address community issues, it is important to work with community stakeholders to determine how they feel about the issue and who may already be working on the problem. Partnerships are crucial in public health because they enable organizations to pool resources, share knowledge, and address community issues more effectively by engaging community stakeholders as part of the solution” -Dr. Sandra Melvin, CEO, IAMH

By leveraging the lived experience, community trust, and strength of local partners, IAMH is closing persistent maternal health gaps and laying the foundation for healthier generations in Mississippi, one community at a time.

To learn more about their partnership approach, visit: <https://www.minority-institute.org>.

