



Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition

Growing Healthy Families Workgroup Meeting

November 13, 2024

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual via Zoom

Minutes

Members Present:

Beatrice Osei-Amoh, African Immigrants Dream Inc.

Stephanie Cotton, Family Support Center

Erin Anderson, HC Health Department

Shannon Blount, HC Public School System

Samantha Cribbs, HC Health Department

Marsha Dawson, HC Office of the Local Children's Board

Joi Gaddy Edbuniwe, Therapy Center for Perinatal Health

Lidymar Gonzalez, HC Health Department

Shannon Harris, HC Health Department

Nayanie Henriquez, HC Health Department

Jiwon Lim, Korean Community Service Center (KCSC)

Ilise Marrazo, HC Health Department

Dr. Vannesia Morgan-Smith, University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center

Tori Rain, HopeWorks of Howard County

Reena Rambharat, HC Health Department

Carrie Singley, John Hopkins Howard County Medical Center (JHHCMC)

Elianah Slotnick, Columbia Association

Ashton Sullivan, HC Office of Children and Families

Lauren Soummers, HC Health Department

Erica Taylor, HC Office of Children and Families

Patrice Tucker, United Healthcare Community Plan

Amber Wilson, Howard County Library System

Staff Present:

Maribet Rivera-Brute, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition

Stephanie Foster, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition

Ashton Jordan, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action/Follow-up
Welcome and Introductions	<p>Ms. Stephanie Foster called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm, welcomed members, invited everyone to introduce themselves via the chat, and provided a recap from the August 14th, 2024 meeting.</p>	<p>LHIC's website: https://www.hclhic.org/</p> <p>Email LHIC with any other announcements or questions: lhic@howardcountymd.gov</p>
Announcement	<p>Ms. Foster introduced herself as the new Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) Community Engagement Coordinator and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.</p> <p>In addition, Ms. Foster introduced Ms. Maribet Rivera-Brute as the new LHIC Director.</p> <p>Ms. Rivera-Brute expressed her excitement at being working with such amazing people and looks forward to working with everyone.</p> <p>Ms. Samantha Cribbs, Maternal & Infant Health Program Supervisor, Bureau of Family Health Services Howard County Health Department, shared updates on community events, including a successful Hatchlings class and announced plans for a multicultural playgroup.</p> <p>Ms. Erica Taylor, Home Visiting Program Manager, Howard County Office of Children and Families Department of Community Resources and Services announced a collaboration with the Howard County Office of Aging and Independence (OAI) for intergenerational programming and announced plans to hold a community baby shower scheduled for early spring 2025.</p>	<p>Access previous meeting minutes: https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2024?catId=366</p>
Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Feedback	<p>Ms. Reena Rambharat discussed the ongoing development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which occurs every three years. She emphasized the importance of community input and outlined the timeline for the plan's phases, including the review of current objectives and provided information of workgroups to address specific health issues.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat explained the formation regarding the new LHIC workgroup (Healthy Lifestyles Workgroup) that will focus on specific health issues,</p>	

acknowledge community feedback, and aims to finalize the CHIP by July of the following year.

In addition, Ms. Rambharat discussed the organized events for Black Maternal Health Week and is committed to tracking progress through visible goals and objectives. The importance of aligning the plan with the hospital's strategic initiatives and the Maryland Department of Health was emphasized.

Lastly, Ms. Rambharat requested feedback from the group on the Growing Healthy Families Workgroup successes, improvements needed, any issues needing to be addressed, and potential solutions:

- Ms. Cribbs emphasized the importance of expanding outreach in Ellicott City and Laurel, Maryland, acknowledged that current activities are more concentrated in Columbia and Elkrigde due to established partnerships. She also acknowledged some efforts in Laurel but expressed a desire for more targeted initiatives in both communities.
- Ms. Cribbs also emphasized the importance of the Healthy Babies Act in connecting undocumented women to prenatal care (Doula awareness/access and the PEACE program), noting challenges in navigating the healthcare system. She also pointed out the growing involvement of community health workers as a promising opportunity to improve access to care.
- Ms. Taylor emphasized importance of addressing gaps in maternal health services, particularly for undocumented women, and families without healthcare.
- Beatrice Osei-Amoh, Founder and President, African Immigrants Dream Inc., recommended the PEACE program as a referral option.
- Shannon Blount, Howard County Public School System, acknowledged the increasing number of families lacking health insurance.
- Members also highlighted the need for better mental health support for parents and the challenges in navigating the healthcare system.
- Elianah Slotnick, Columbia Association, emphasized the importance of mental health and community support, and shared plans for a playgroup designed to connect caretakers and children in an inclusive environment. This

	<p>program will aim to explore diverse cultural practices in child-rearing, with each week dedicated to a different continent. Initial discussions with community members have been positive, plans on starting in February 2025 (Wednesdays, 9am-10am) at the Columbia Association Teen Center in Oakland Mills, and Ms. Slotnick will keep the group posted when this program will be open for registration.</p>	
<p>Planning for Black Maternal Health Week Discussion</p>	<p>Ms. Cribbs discussed the need to start the planning phase for Black Maternal Health Week, April 11 – 17, 2025. She invited workgroup members to join a planning committee, and Ms. Foster will create a spreadsheet to manage those interested in joining. The planning committee will meet separately from the regular workgroup.</p> <p>Ms. Cribbs mention the previous year’s event was well-received, which featured a panel discussion and wellness activities, and acknowledged there’s interest in expanding offerings during next year’s event.</p> <p>In addition, Ms. Cribbs highlighted the challenges of securing a venue in the month of April due to the high demand in Howard County, suggested Miller Branch Library based on previous positive experiences, and opened the floor for member feedback and to give suggestions for possible locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Laurel Community Center • 50+ Center • East Columbia Branch Library • Howard Community College <p>Ms. Cribbs stressed the importance of having the event that is accessible via public transportation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members also discussed the benefits of having events at the libraries to attract attendees who may not have registered in advance. • Ms. Cribbs expressed interest in reconnecting with the East Columbia 50+ Center, as it’s a new and well-received facility. • Other members acknowledged hosting events at the East Columbia location in the past and praised its location and amenities. <p>Ms. Cribbs appreciated all the feedback given and will look for potential locations and secure a date for the event.</p>	

	<p>Lastly, Ms. Cribbs proposed organizing events to celebrate Minority Health Month, highlighting the need to coordinate with existing activities in the community (Earth Day, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed the logistics of securing space for services such as massage therapy, which was popular in past events. • Members acknowledged that Spring Break falls on April 14-21, 2025, and the importance of avoiding scheduling events during that time to minimize conflicts. 	
Focus Groups and Website Feedback	<p>Ms. Cribbs highlighted the need for focus groups to better understand community experiences related to birth and prenatal care, aiming to inform the community about the maternal health programs and programs provided at the Howard County Health Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Erin Anderson agreed on the importance of focus groups and suggested partnering with hospitals to recruit participants effectively. • Ms. Ilise Marrazzo emphasized leveraging the partnerships with the new moms’ group to facilitate discussions and gather feedback. • Ms. Cribbs will explore partnerships with community organizations to recruit participate for focus groups and reach out to discuss potential focus group participation. <p>Lastly, Ms. Cribbs will gather feedback on the website updates and ensure accessibility for community members.</p>	<p>Please visit the LHIC Growing Healthy Families webpage and send any updates needed to kfoster@howardcountymd.gov</p>
Wrap up and Next Steps	<p>Ms. Foster concluded the meeting with reminders regarding upcoming events, expressed appreciation for the contributions of all participants, and the next scheduled meeting is to be determined.</p>	<p>Email lhic@howardcountymd.gov with any questions.</p> <p>Minutes will be posted: http://www.hclhic.org/</p>

Respectfully submitted by:
Ms. Stephanie Foster
Community Engagement Coordinator
Howard County Health Department