

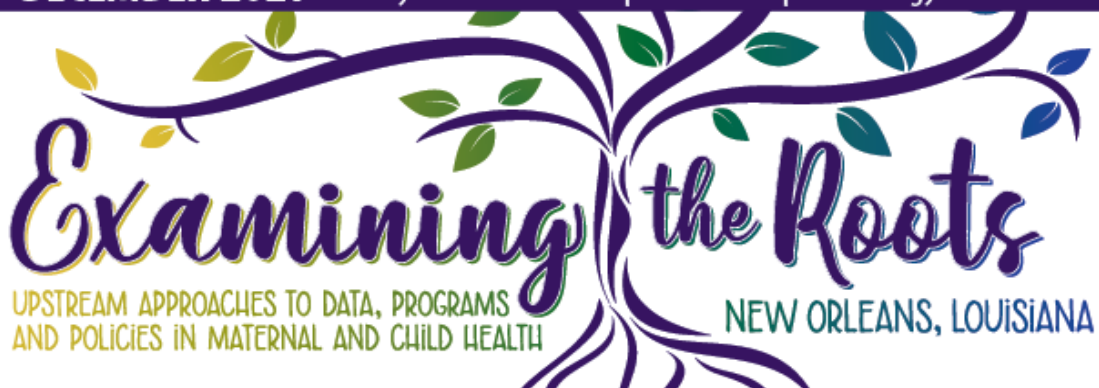
April 2021

CityLights



Local MCH: Lighting the Path for Communities

DECEMBER 2021 — CityMatCH Leadership and MCH Epidemiology Conference



Conference Connection

What are Some of Our 2020 Plenary Speakers Up To?



Dr. Darrick Hamilton

Darrick Hamilton, who headlined the Magda Peck Leadership Symposium with his session titled, “Political Economy of Race and the Covid-19 Response: An Opportunity for Change,” has been lending his voice and expertise to national platforms:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/01/25/just-as-we-score-policies-budget-impact-we-should-score-for-racial-equity-as-well/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/opinion/student-debt-cancellation-biden.html>

Since the 2020 conference, Dr. Hamilton has established a new role as the Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy and the founding director of the Institute for the Study of Race, Stratification, and the Political Economy at The New School.

<https://www.newschool.edu/milano/faculty/darrick-hamilton/>



Dr. Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha

Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, who presented during the session titled, “Data and Racism: How can we do better?” has been paving the way for research devoted to studying the disparities in maternal health care for Black women and mothers. She launched the MOTHER Lab in 2020 out of Tufts University School of Medicine: <https://ndidiamutahphd.com/> <https://www.bu.edu/antiracism-center/profile/ndidiamaka-amutah-onukagha/> <https://motherlab.org/lab-director/>

You can see a recap of our full 2020 virtual conference here:

<https://www.citymatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-Conference-Archive-7.pdf>



Spotlight on 2021 Conference

If 2020 was the Year of the Pivot, then 2021 is the Year of Adaptability!

We will offer a hybrid conference event this year with an onsite experience available to those who are excited to travel, as well as a virtual component for those who are unable to do so.

What can you expect from the 2021 CityMatCH MCH Leadership and Epidemiology Conference?

- Cutting-edge content
- Networking and connection opportunities
- Skills and practical tools to tackle today's MCH challenges

We are thrilled to announce our **2021 Keynote Speaker: Abigail Echo-Hawk, M.A.** Ms. Echo-Hawk, an enrolled member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, is the Chief Research Officer for the Seattle Indian Health Board, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving American Indians and Alaska Natives in King County Washington.



Abigail Echo-Hawk, M.A.

She also serves as the Director of the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), a Tribal Epidemiology Center whose mission is to support the health and well-being of urban Indian communities through information, scientific inquiry, and technology.

Ms. Echo-Hawk directs a staff of public health professionals who work on multiple ongoing research, evaluation, and disease surveillance projects to benefit American Indian/Alaska Natives in urban and rural settings.

We look forward to a challenging and engaging keynote session with Ms. Echo-Hawk!



The Alignment for Action Learning Collaborative

In early 2021, CityMatCH launched a new effort called the Alignment for Action Learning Collaborative (AAC). The aim of the AAC is to create a 5% change in a state-level MCH priority area over the course of the collaborative. Teams are comprised of state and local-level public health professionals working collaboratively to select, plan, and carry out upstream and downstream strategies based on their common priorities.

The first cohort of the AAC consists of eight teams of state and local MCH professionals from Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Ohio (two teams), Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The Kick-Off event for the collaborative took place in March with a lineup of subject matter experts and ample time for the teams to begin building their relationships with each other and finding potential areas of alignment. Coordinating local-level work and experiences with state-level priorities and resources also gives public health the opportunity to elevate “boots on the ground” experiences as well as connecting locals to their state Title V office. Although CityMatCH prefers an in-person launch, the virtual meeting was well attended and provided bridge-building opportunities for team members and CityMatCH staff alike.

Region V Infant Mortality Webinar Series

As data shows, HHS Region V states currently experience much disparity in birth outcomes, especially between Black and White populations. As a part of an effort to mitigate these disparities and ultimately improve equity and birth outcomes for the Region, MCHB and CityMatCH have been working to provide content through an enhanced monthly webinar series featuring subject matter experts about different components of equity work. Embedded in the series will also be examples of practical applications of frameworks and innovation in equity to enable attendees to see themselves in the work.

Although the original author is debated, there is a well-known quote that states, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.” If MCH professionals continue to do “business as usual,” we will not see the changes in MCH outcomes we urgently need. It is time to be disruptive, innovative, and authentic in our equity work. Moreover, equity is not a singular intervention; it is a value and framework with which we should view all of our duties in MCH. Through this series, CityMatCH not only hopes to build technical capacity in public health practice, but also to instill the value of true justice and equity in attendees in order to help drive change for the Region.

Each webinar is recorded and housed on the CityMatCH website:

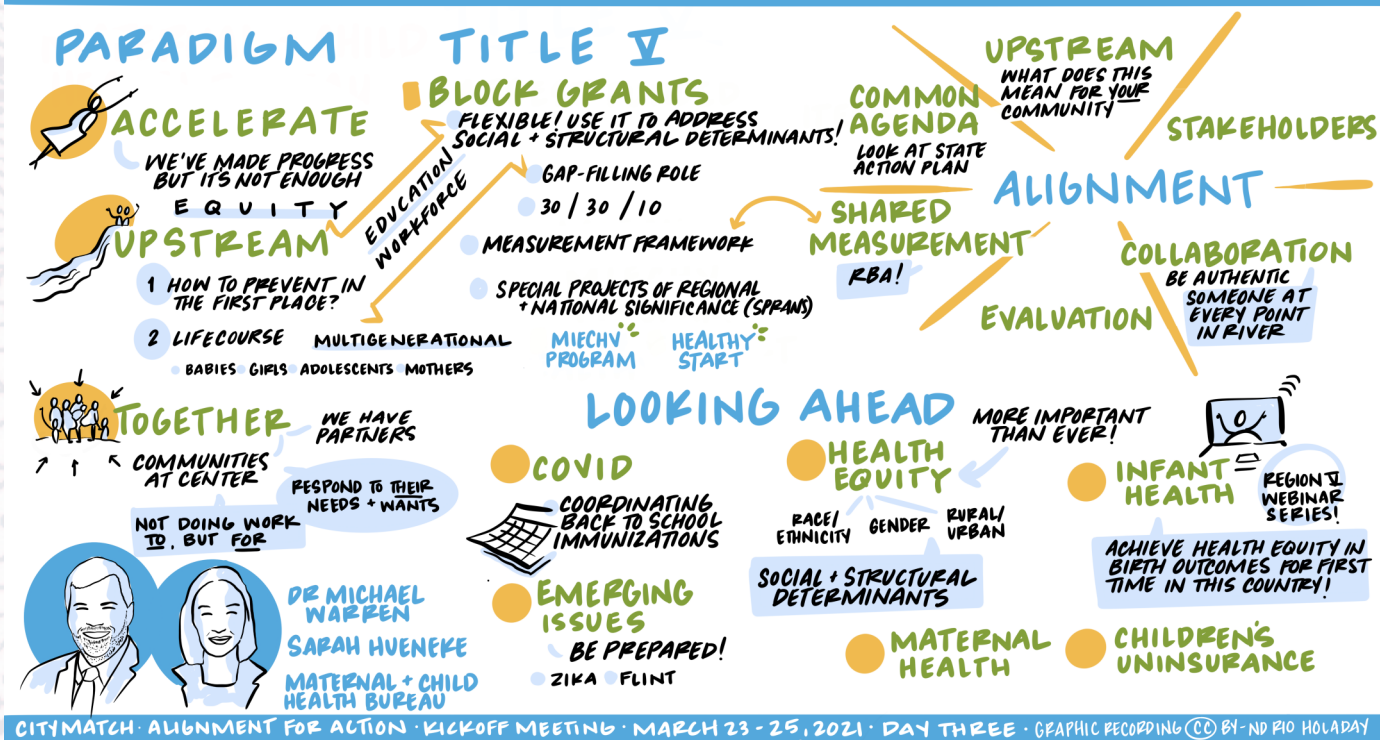
<https://www.citymatch.org/region-v-infant-mortality-webinar-series/>



Graphic Design

by Rio Holaday

OVERVIEW and OPPORTUNITIES for STRENGTHENING STATE and URBAN MATERNAL and CHILD HEALTH



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Bibhusha Karki, MDP

Hello, Namaste and Adab,

My name is **Bibhusha Karki**. I have a curious mind, a heart of an artist, and a soul that follows mystics. All of this has led to a passion for capturing stories through photography, art, travel, data analysis, collaboration, and research.

As a Senior Public Health Project Coordinator, I am currently working on various research projects such as scoping review and community needs assessment of childhood asthma, the emotional labor of health equity, and social determinants of health. I am also working on projects with the MCH Evidence team to help build strategies across various states to improve Maternal and Child Health. Finally, I get to also interact with CityMatCH's membership base and help individuals become our members.

I believe access to free quality healthcare is a universal right. Regardless of race, ethnicity, and economic status, the dream of any individual, being able to access quality healthcare and live a quality life, keeps me hopeful in my work.

Three fun facts about me:

- I play the violin (beginner level-nursery rhymes at the moment).
- I am currently trying to share my photography and art through exhibitions and blogging. In 2020, I had my first exhibition as a community artist in Omaha and ended up selling my photography. Check out my blog at [Moments Captured in My Lens](#).
- I am a health economist in progress through the school of self-learning. The influence of technology and economics in health makes me super excited. Please feel free to connect with me on [LinkedIn](#).



Nishka Bommareddy, BS, MPH

Hello! My name is **Nishka Bommareddy**. I am originally from Houston, TX. I obtained my B.S. degree in Biochemistry from the University of Houston in 2018 and recently graduated from Saint Louis University with my Master of Public Health degree with concentrations in Global Health and Maternal and Child Health in May 2020.

My hobbies include rock climbing and learning ASL. I have been a Project Coordinator with CityMatCH since December 2020.



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(cont'd) I chose public health because I want to be able to bridge the gap between communities and the medical field. I would like to be an advocate for communities and educate medical providers to understand cultural differences should be recognized and considered when diagnosing each patient and that it is not a “one size fits all” situation.

Some fun facts about me: I am a huge fan of languages and striving to become multilingual. I am bilingual in English and Telugu, and currently learning French. I have been practicing and learning classical Indian dance since I was three, and I am a huge true crime fan!



Nishka Bommareddy, BS, MPH



Ashleigh Sutphen,
MPH

Hello, my name is **Ashleigh Sutphen** and I am currently a Graduate Project Assistant and have been on the team since October 2019. I assist with coordinating the annual Training Course in MCH Epidemiology, and logistical support for CityLeaders and the perinatal HIV taskforce.

I am currently in the final weeks of my Master of Public Health program here at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. I received my Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2019.

I'm the oldest of 4 siblings in my family's home, recently married, and by the middle of this year I have spent about half my life in Colorado and half in Nebraska.

I would consider one of my favorite hobbies is the joy I find in local coffee shops. In Omaha, I found Hardy Coffee Co. and it is my absolute favorite. Even when I am visiting new places, I love finding the best local cup of joe!

My childhood home is Greeley, Colorado. Then I moved to small town, Hemingford, Nebraska during high school. I have stayed in Nebraska ever since and I have slowly moved from the western edge of the state, to the eastern edge of the state, about 7.5 hours, to Omaha.

I have always been drawn to helping others, advocating for health, and have had a strong interest



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(*cont'd*) for macro-level public work. I originally thought I would pursue a career in social work, until I realized that I wanted to help prevent, not only react, to issues women, children, and families were facing (enter Maternal and Child Health, Stage Right!)

In deciding where I wanted to pursue my undergraduate degree, learned of a pipeline program offered in the University of Nebraska system to pursue an MPH and I jumped on the opportunity! The program provided me with the chance to set my foundational studies in public administration and then led me to my professional studies in public health/MCH here at UNMC.



DeAnna Young, BMS

Hello, my name is **DeAnna Young**, BMS. I was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, although my family has roots in Plano, TX, Camden, AR, and Glendale, AZ. I am a Communications Project Coordinator at CityMatCH. I control the social media platforms, website, create CityMatCH's monthly newsletters, compile email blasts, and I get to do our CityLights creation/editing. I began as a Staff Assistant in the Fall of 2018. I have had the privilege to work alongside many amazing co-workers on multiple projects in that time, and found my way into compiling content. I decided that I like it a lot!

In 2020, I graduated with my Bachelor's of Multidisciplinary Studies from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, although my focus was mainly Criminal Justice and Psychology.

I have 3 working teenagers and two fur-babies that keep me very busy! Outside of home life, I enjoy making jewelry, bike riding, learning a new language & walking trails.

Three interesting things about me:

- My children are the 8th set of Fraternal Twins in my family
- All of the children born in the last two generations of my family were born on holidays
- I am a HUGE animal lover, but my favorite animal is the Squirrel. (It's something about their cute, furry little bodies that brings me joy!)



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Kiara Lyons, MPH, CPH

Hello, my name is **Kiara Lyons, MPH, CPH**, and I am currently a PhD in Epidemiology student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

I like to say that I have a mind for data, but a heart for people. I chose my profession as an epidemiologist because it allowed me to see the bigger picture of the health burdens we face, be that voice for others, and reach people in need where they are.



My research focuses on mental and behavioral health among youth and adolescents, with a specific interest on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). My passion includes going back to the grassroots of epidemiological research and re-evaluating surveillance and methodological efforts in examining mental health among a population. I also believe it is necessary to rethink how we approach the topic of mental health in minority communities.

An important long-term goal of mine is to help improve the relationships between public health practice, research, and communities in efforts to appropriately bridge gaps in healthcare and address the mental health needs of a population. In my free time, I enjoy reading, hiking, traveling (amateur postcard collector), and spending quality time with my husband Jason and our son Kayden.



Left to Right: Kiara, Kayden, & Jason

Fun Facts About Me:

- I have never broken a bone
- Although I write with my right hand, I do all sports with my left hand.



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Briana Baptist, MPH

Hello, my name is **Briana Baptist** and I am a Meharry Intern at CityMatCH. While here at CityMatCH, I hope to be exposed to all the behind the scenes work that goes into creating helpful and impactful content and events. I also hope to gain any necessary skills that will further my expertise in this field so that I can use said skills to be a catalyst (as it relates to MCH) in the future.

Giving birth has always been a fear of mine. This led me to do research about it. Upon doing research, I learned that Black women are 3 to 4 times more likely to die for childbirth related reasons, and that a large chunk of those deaths are preventable. The statistics around this phenomena encourage me to be a driving force in changing this reality.

I hope to see more campaigns that continually bring awareness to this disparity and develop ways to combat it. I want to see sustainable change. Ultimately, I hope to see the burden of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black mothers significantly decrease. Black mothers should be able to give birth without fear of, and actual heightened chances of dying.

I decided to pursue a career in MCH after listening to personal stories from guest speakers about their birth experiences, watching heartbreaking documentaries about women telling their stories about almost dying from childbirth, and listening to loved ones tell the stories that the mothers are not here to tell really hurt my feelings, however, at the same time, it encouraged me to want to pursue a career in MCH.

Three interesting things about me are:

- I am oddly afraid of giraffes.
- My dream job as a child was to be a Teacher.
- I watched "What the Health" on Netflix and stopped eating meat cold turkey. I am almost one year clean!



CityMatCH Member Calls

CityMatCH hosted three **Member COVID-19 Check-in Calls** to provide a time for sharing, asking questions of your colleagues, and hearing from peers around the country.

Our first two check-in calls were focused on our pandemic response efforts and sharing the current realities of local MCH including MCH staff shifting to work in areas outside of MCH, the impacts on service provision, and taking care of your staff and yourself during this time.

Then, in response to the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, and specifically, African American communities and witnessing the increase in Anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes across the nation, CityMatCH hosted a third call to discuss issues of racism, disparities, and inequities within our communities and what we can do to address them.

And finally, CityMatCH provided our members with **Action Against Racism: Discussion on Doing the Work.**

Many of our members were wondering where to start, how to work towards anti-racism, what their role is as a non-Black person in breaking down anti-Black racism, and how we can work *together* to contribute to the movement and fight for justice – this panel discussion provided conversation on each of these topics. We invite you to listen to the [recording](#) to continue these conversations and to continue pushing against racism personally, professionally and in conjunction with our peers. *We must push together.*

Recording link: https://youtu.be/ZJ1_V2kccY4



Encouraging Self-Care for Staff

By Jessica Ehule, MS, MPH, CityMatCH Director of Programs

Take a moment. Stop what you are doing. Rest your feet on the floor and take a deep breath in... and release. Continue breathing. Relax your shoulders, unclench your jaw, and let all of the thoughts of the day go. Take another deep breath...and release.



Photo credit: Jessica Ehule, Niagara Falls, NY

Congratulations! That deep breath signifies that you've made it to the second quarter of 2021 by no small feat! This past year has brought challenges to the field of MCH and our world as a whole that many never imagined. Public health professionals are enduring the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual toll of a pandemic, the fight against social injustice and racism, learning to pivot their focus based on the current needs, and holding systems accountable all while serving the community. This can be a formula for burnout.

Managers and Supervisors, you have a unique opportunity to ensure the overall health and well-being of your staff. Within your leadership roles, you can encourage self-care through a number of actions. Here are a few we recommend.

- ***Time Away from Work:*** In a world where many of us are working from home, it can be difficult to separate work-life from home-life. Some may find themselves working overtime. Even if you are going into the office, the demands of our staff during the pandemic have caused many to accrue leave and sick time reaching maximum limits. Encourage staff to take time away from work to re-center and balance as needed. If your agency can manage this, take an organization mental health day for everyone, or switch off groups over a couple of days if needed.
- ***Encourage Individual Concept of Self-Care:*** Self-care looks different for everyone. It could be meditation, listening to music, coloring, practicing your jump shot, walking...the list goes on. Encourage staff members to engage in activities that bring them joy, and you may be able to incorporate some of these into your group activities or organizational culture and practice.
- ***Celebrate Victories:*** These can be personal or professional. Take a moment to recognize staff members doing innovative work. Celebrate the first steps of a 2020 baby. Thank your staff for all that they do each and every day.



(*cont'd*) Celebrating these victories will boost morale and connection amongst employees. Try to start your next zoom call asking about this week's victories and watch the Brady Bunch faces light up across your screen as each celebratory remark is shared.

Practicing regular self-care is vital to the health and well-being of the individual, organization, and community. As you encourage self-care for your staff members, do not forget about yourself. The suggestions listed in this article apply to you as well.

Thank you MCH professionals for continuing to do the work and striving for equity in our communities across the nation.

I'll leave you with this wish:

***“My wish for you is that you continue.
Continue to be who and how you are, to
astonish a mean world with your acts of
kindness. Continue to allow humor to
lighten the burden of your tender heart.”***

-Maya Angelou -

Sincerely,

N. Jessica Ehule





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DECEMBER 2021 — CityMatCH Leadership and MCH Epidemiology Conference



SAVE THE DATES

Abstract/Workshop Submissions

February 2021– May 10, 2021

Registration

August 2021

Conference

December 8-10, 2021

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