SEIZING THE MOMENT: ACTION AND ADVOCACY TO IMPROVE MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

Presentation by Kay Johnson
Region V Infant Mortality Webinar Series
June 16, 2021

Kay, collecting data at a young age.
Starting perspective…What I believe

• Equity depends upon strong and well-implemented public policies.
• Every person should have the freedom to decide if and when to be a parent and raise a family.
• Reproductive justice will be attained when all people have the economic, social, and political power and the means to make decisions about their bodies, sexuality, health, and families.
• Clinical practice changes, QI, or individual behavior change are necessary but not sufficient to improve outcomes and end disparities.
• To have equitable impact on the greatest number of women, children, and families, we must ensure effective public policies, programs, and services.
• Data are not and never have been neutral.
RECOVERY

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What does COVID-19 emergency mean for families?

Disrupted the lives of virtually all children and families, with greater challenges among those already economically fragile.

Those without wealth and those limited by structural racism had:

- Less in emergency savings
- Fewer places to borrow money
- Less home ownership, more risk of eviction
- Less likely to have equity in a home against which to borrow
- Greater chances of losing job
- More pressure to continue working away from home

Changing Policy and Support to Ensure Equity and Shift Social Determinants of Health

• Public investments help to:
  • Eliminate child/family poverty, raise opportunity
  • Provide for basic needs (e.g., food, housing)
  • Support and strengthen families
  • Promote positive experiences at home and in communities
  • Improve health across the lifecourse, for women, children, and families
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Who does the American Rescue Plan help?
American families

- $1,400 checks
- $424 billion

State and local aid (prevent layoffs and service cuts)
- $350 billion

Unemployment insurance
- $246 billion

Veterans
- $17 billion

Restaurant and bars
- $25 billion

Renters and homeowners
- $40 billion

FEMA disaster relief
- $47 billion

Farmers, small businesses, and other vital industries
- $109 billion

Vaccinations and health care
- $176 billion

Reopen schools and higher education
- $178 billion

Tax credits, aid, and child care for families
- $219 billion

Source: Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Budget Effects of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021" (2021)
Shift in Public Policy Direction for Children

- Biggest shift in child and family policy in many years – maybe 25 (Clinton-Gingrich), 60 (LBJ), or 85 (FDR).
- Shift toward policy designed to help a wider array of families.

- Children and families whose lives have been disrupted by the COVID-19 emergency will see immediate relief through income, health, child care, nutrition, education, and mental health support.

- The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) included many one-year improvements that put U.S. on a pathway to end child poverty within a generation — if (and that’s a big if) these policy changes can be made permanent.
### Key Provisions of American Rescue Plan & ARPA

**Economic relief to families with children**
- Child tax credit (CTC)
- Earned income tax credit (EITC)
- Child & dependent care tax credit
- Family leave tax credits
- $1,400 relief checks
- Unemployment benefits
  - Minimum wage (not adopted)

**Protect health and health coverage**
- Medicaid protections & expansion
- Postpartum coverage option
- ACA premium costs
- Expand health workforce
- Safety net providers
- Vaccine campaign
- Pediatric and other mental health

**Assistance with basic needs**
- Cash assistance (TANF)
- Child care assistance
- Utilities assistance (LIHEAP)
- Food assistance (WIC & SNAP)
- Home visiting supports
- Housing assistance

**Open education settings safely**
- Child care stabilization
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- K-12 schools (ESSER)
- “Hardest hit” education funds
- Equity challenge and MOE
- IDEA programs 0-21
- Higher education emergency relief

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[Links to related resources are provided at the bottom of the slide.]

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https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/blog/2021/03/10/the-american-rescue-plan-passed-now-what/
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)  
Investments in Women, Children & Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>$ BILLIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Elementary and secondary school emergency relief fund</td>
<td>$ 128.56</td>
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<td>2203-4</td>
<td>CCDBG and Child Care Stabilization</td>
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<td>Head Start</td>
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<td>2207</td>
<td>CAPTA</td>
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<td>2301</td>
<td>Improvement to WIC benefits</td>
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<td>3021</td>
<td>Funding for public health workforce</td>
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<td>3031</td>
<td>Funding for community health centers and community care</td>
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<td>Funding for family planning</td>
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<td>Funding for children under the care of DHHS</td>
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<td>3051-57</td>
<td>Funding for mental health and substance abuse services</td>
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<td>3102</td>
<td><strong>State option to cover women under Medicaid 1-year postpartum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9101</td>
<td>Emergency assistance for families through home visiting (MIECHV)</td>
<td>$ .15</td>
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<tr>
<td>9611</td>
<td>Child Tax Credit Improvements for 2021</td>
<td>$ 105.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source ARPA. Table on investments in women, children, & families adapted from Charles Bruner. InCK Marks. 2021.
ARPA TO DO LIST

✓ Find out how ARPA policy changes may impact your state and community.

✓ Understand how ARPA changes affect programs or services for women, children, and families.

✓ Inform decision making about implementation.

✓ Train staff (e.g., navigators, care coordinators).

✓ Educate the people you serve about opportunities.

✓ Connect people to other resources (e.g., VITA).

✓ Use DHMIC and community partners to help inform and engage people.
ARPA: Tax & Income Supports for Families

- Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- Unemployment
- Tax credits for family leave

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**Tax/Income Support Policy TO DO LIST**

- Understand differences and changes in CTC, EITC, and child care tax credit.
- Inform families about tax credit opportunities.
- Inform about family leave.
- Connect families to medical-legal partner, VITA, or other resources.

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https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/blog/2021/03/10/the-american-rescue-plan-passed-now-what/
90% of all children can benefit from Child Tax Credit expansion. Among these, 27 million can be lifted out of poverty.

### Estimated Impact of Child Tax Credit Changes (ARPA) on Child Poverty Rates, By Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Current Rate</th>
<th>Rate with CTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Children</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Children</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx Children</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Children</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
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</table>

Source: Poverty and Social Policy Center at Columbia University, comparing the supplemental poverty measure before and after CTC change. [https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/publications](https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/publications)

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Earned Income Tax Credit Improves MCH Outcomes

Improved maternal and infant health

Better school performance

Increased college, work and earnings in next generation

ARPA: Emergency Assistance for Families

- **COVID relief checks & enhanced unemployment**
- **Emergency assistance**
  - Income (TANF)
  - Food ($3 billion boost for SNAP & WIC, and access to groceries to replace school food)
  - Child care (CCDBG subsidies)
  - Housing & utilities (rental assistance, LIHEAP, homeowner counseling)

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Support for Concrete Needs TO DO LIST

- Train staff.
- Inform families about emergency assistance.
- Confirm COVID relief check was received.
- Connect families to WIC, SNAP, TANF, housing, etc.
- Use community partners.

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Center on Budget and Policy Priorities https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/3-10-21pov.pdf
Biden Administration Priorities: Health Coverage

- Biden-Harris Administration is using Executive Orders, agency action, and legislative proposals to **improve health coverage**
  - **Special enrollment period (SEP) to August 15, 2021**
    - SEP hotline 1-800-318-2596
  - ARPA lowers premiums for most enrolled in ACA marketplace coverage
  - Reverse damage to ACA & Medicaid

ACA Health Coverage TO DO LIST

- Check out healthcare.gov and your state’s insurance marketplace website.
- Assess need for coverage.
- Inform families about Special Enrollment Period (SEP).
- Assist families with online enrollment process.

ARPA: Medicaid

- State option to extend postpartum Medicaid & CHIP coverage
- 5% increase in FMAP for new ACA Medicaid expansions
- Mandatory coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment under Medicaid & CHIP (no cost sharing)
- Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) FMAP increase

Postpartum Care TO DO LIST

- Support postpartum Medicaid expansion in your state.
- Learn more about the postpartum coverage loss among those you serve.
- Help birthing people get timely postpartum care.

New Mothers Losing Coverage Postpartum

- Half had below poverty income
- Half were Latinas / Hispanic
- Nearly 2/3 were citizens (62%)
- More than half were married, and another quarter live with a partner
- While one-third were employed, 59% not in labor force

Medicaid and CHIP coverage for infants

- More than half babies—2.2 million infants enrolled in Medicaid.
- 6 in 10 Black, AI/AN, and Hispanic infants. (46% of total)
- Over half of Black, AI/AN, and Hispanic children of all ages 0-18.

No more missing babies in Medicaid

• Federal law guarantees automatic and continuous enrollment for babies born with a Medicaid financed birth.

• They should not have a break in coverage from the date of birth through the first year of life.

• Too many babies fall through the cracks in enrollment processes.
  • Delaware averages about 23% or 1,500 babies not enrolled for full first year.

Infants in Medicaid
TO DO LIST

✓ Review “missing babies” report.
✓ Check state website.
✓ Inform families about automatic and continuous eligibility for infants.
✓ Help family confirm infant is enrolled.

ARPA: Public Health / Community Workforce

✓ $7.66 billion to expand and sustain the public health workforce
✓ $7.6 billion for Community Health Centers/FQHCs
✓ $8.75 billion for public health agencies
✓ $47.8 billion for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and mitigation

Public Health Capacity TO DO LIST

✓ Learn about your state’s allocation and plans.
✓ Encourage hiring of family specialists and community health workers.
✓ Encourage workforce development that supports families with young children.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/blog/2021/03/10/the-american-rescue-plan-passed-now-what/
ARPA: Support for Home Visiting

Expand MIECHV by $150 million through 9/30/2022

• Allowable uses of the funding include:
  • Serving families with virtual home visits
  • Hazard pay, staff costs, or training associated with virtual home visits
  • Devices and connectivity for home visitors and families to facilitate remote visits
  • Emergency supplies, including diapering supplies, infant formula, food, soap and hand sanitizer, and gift cards to purchase fresh groceries.

Photo credit: Adobe Stock.
American Families Plan

• Make Child Tax Credit and other tax credits permanent
• Provide assistance and support
  • Child care
  • Paid family & medical leave
  • Nutrition and food security
  • Unemployment
  • Affordable Care Act credits and premiums
• Boost education access from universal preschool through college

https://www.whitehouse.gov/american-families-plan/
https://cssp.org/2021/02/one-path-to-a-child-allowance-reforming-the-child-tax-credit/
Also see: American Family Act of 2021 https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/928/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22HR+1%22%5D%7D&r=24&s=1

"Potentially the most important piece of legislation for families and children ever."
- Bruce Lesley, President
Putting the pieces together—American Rescue Plan, American Jobs Act, and American Families Plan

What might such changes mean in terms of improving the health and survival of mothers and infants?
MCH Leaders can leverage investments

• Using resources from ARPA and future spending in American Jobs Plan, American Families Plan, and other investments to build stronger early childhood systems in their communities.
  • You have the community partnerships and leverage to make change.
  • You are the ones most likely to braid funds.
  • You are at the point of inflection.
Now is the time to go farther, do better in maternal and infant health.

Source: https://blog.greendot.org/juneteenth-is-a-holiday-of-celebration-reflection/
A time to go farther, do better…

What we’ve been doing was:

- Incremental and limited by socio-political context
- Not investing in whole families
- Not reflective of women’s voices
- Not acknowledging or addressing bias and racism
- Not sharing power with women, families, communities
https://blackmaternalhealthcaucus-underwood.house.gov/Momnibus

Photos courtesy of Black Maternal Health Caucus.
Momnibus Components and Other Bills

Momnibus 9 Component Bills

1. Social Determinants for Moms: H.R. 6132
2. Kira Johnson Act: H.R. 6144
4. Perinatal Workforce Act: H.R. 6164
5. Data to Save Moms Act: H.R. 6165
6. Moms MATTER Act: H.R. 6143
7. Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act: H.R. 6129
8. Tech to Save Moms Act: H.R. 6138
9. IMPACT to Save Moms Act: H.R. 6137

Related legislation in last Congress

- Helping MOMS Act: H.R. 4996
- HEALTH for MOM Act (S. 4863)
- MOMMAS Act: H.R. 1897/S. 916
- Maternal Health Pandemic Response Act of 2020: H.R. 8027
- Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act: H.R. 4995
- Maternal CARE Act: H.R. 2902/S. 3363
- Maternal Health Accountability Act: H.R. 1318/S. 1112
- Modernizing Objective Standards (MOMS): Act S. 116
Momnibus Components and Other Bills, 117th Congress

**Momnibus H.R.959/S.346**

**Component Bills**

1. Social Determinants for Moms: H.R.934/S.851
4. Perinatal Workforce Act: H.R.945/S.287
5. Data to Save Moms Act: H.R.925/S.347
7. Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act: H.R.948/S.342
8. Tech to Save Moms Act: H.R.937/S.893
9. IMPACT to Save Moms Act: H.R.950/S.334
11. Protecting Moms and Babies Against Climate Change Act: H.R.957/S.423

**Related legislation in Congress**

- MOMMAS Act: S. 411
- MOMS Act: S1333
- Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act: S.1675
- Maternal CARE Act: H.R.2556/S.1234
- Modernizing Objective Standards (MOMS) Act: S.287
- Supporting Best Practices for Healthy Moms Act: H.R.1350/S.408
- COVID-19 Safe Birthing Act: H.R.2589
- Rural MOMS Act: H.R.769/S.1491
- Improve maternal health: S.1675
- Amend Public Health Service Act: S.1804
- Connected MOM Act: S.1042
- Maternal Immunization Enhancement Act: S.114
- Oral Health for Moms Act: S.560
- Data Mapping to Save Moms’ Lives Act: H.R.1218/S.198
- Connected MOM Act: S.801
- Mothers and Newborns Success Act: S.1804
- Health for MOM Act of 2021: S.1622
### Key topics of maternal health bills introduced last session

#### Coverage
- Postpartum coverage option for states
- Incentives for extended postpartum coverage
- Innovative payment models

#### Quality
- Perinatal Quality Collaboratives
- Provider training (e.g. bias)
- Workforce expansion & diversification
- Pregnancy medical home / care coordination
- Data & quality measurement
- Grants to states to implement best practices

#### SDOH
- Interagency task force on SDOH
- Reports from NASEM, GAO, and HHS, VA, USDA, Justice, etc.
- Community-based programs (grants and/or technical assistance)

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Addressing Unequal Treatment

Need layers of change

1. Improve **coverage**, benefits, and costs.

2. Address the role of **racism** in access to equitable care for BIPOC.

3. Implement **practice** guidelines.


5. Design and conduct **QI** efforts with an equity lens, not just measure disparities at the end.

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**Preconception/ Pre-Pregnancy Advice and Services, US, 2011-2013**

![Bar chart showing the comparison of advice and services by race from 2011-2013.](chart)

Source: Pozol et al. CDC. MMWR. 2017;66(20).
1. Adopt policies to improve social determinants of health and well-being (e.g., tax credits, paid family leave, TANF as family leave).

2. Expand Medicaid eligibility to ACA 138% of poverty level or higher.

3. Extend Medicaid eligibility for one year postpartum.

4. Make federal agency and policy changes to support maternal mortality reduction (e.g., “Mомнibus” bill, HHS plan).

5. Adequately fund safety net and community-based services.


7. DO NOT cut funding for services for women, children, and families as a result of current COVID-19 related budget crises.
Small policy examples

1. Build workforce and adequate reimbursement for community health workers, navigators, doulas, and others who provide care coordination.
2. Incentivize use of patient-centered, team-based care in medical homes.
4. Provide ACA preventive services without cost sharing to all in Medicaid.
5. Develop Medicaid interconception/postpartum care projects for enrolled higher risk women (*no new authority or eligibility required*).
6. Adopt strong Medicaid managed care contract provisions for MCH.
7. Use perinatal quality collaboratives to advance equity.
Program strategies in public health

1. Promote reproductive health and autonomy.
2. Build respectful and meaningful partnerships with families and communities.
3. Use an equity lens to assess and modify policies, programs, and practices.
4. Train the MCH workforce on root causes of inequity, and anti-racism.
5. Shift from monitoring behavior toward listening to and supporting women/families.
6. Adopt a state or city/county strategic plan aimed at birth equity.
7. Focus on improving social determinants of health.
8. Collect and use data by race/ethnicity, income, and insurance status to monitor quality.
Practice strategies

1. Operate under medical home principles
   • Primary care that is: patient/family centered, comprehensive, team-based, accessible, coordinated, and committed to quality, safety, and equity.

2. Identify and address structural barriers to care, including racism.

3. Make practice changes guided by professional recommendations
   • ACOG: “combat racism, racial bias, and achieve inclusiveness in our own professional settings…”

4. Build awareness of and seek to remedy practitioner bias.

5. Assist in recruitment and training of providers from racial/ethnic groups that reflect the community served (more cultural congruency).

6. Engage with others on issues of equity and social justice.
Measurement strategies

- MCH field is talking about how we measure to advance equity.
- We must move beyond just measuring disparities in birth outcomes, again and again.
- Using a social determinants of health (SDOH) framework and an equity lens, this framework contains a broader set of measures.
- Data for most measures available at the state and county levels.
MCH leaders impact on the future

• Act with urgency – many ARPA opportunities are only for one year.
• Help guide decisions in your state.
• Implement policy from your role.
• Assist birthing people, families, and youth in understanding and benefiting from changes in policy.
• Educate decision makers about the importance of SDOH and responding to concrete needs.
• Advance anti-racist, anti-bias practices, programs, and policies.
• Do better, now that we know better.
DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS
Select References