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Building Effective Partnerships to Improve Birth Outcomes by Reducing Obesity: the B'more Fit for Healthy Babies Coalition of Baltimore

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Obesity affects a large percentage of Baltimore City's population with repercussions for maternal health and birth outcomes including an increased susceptibility to cardiovascular disease, gestational and type 2 diabetes, preeclampsia, and caesarean delivery. The B'more Fit for Healthy Babies Coalition was created in response to the growing obesity rates among women, particularly those residing in low-resource urban neighborhoods in Baltimore. The coalition- part of the comprehensive B'more for Healthy Babies infant mortality strategy- is serving as a catalyst for obesity risk reduction strategies for Baltimore's most vulnerable reproductive-age women and their families. Partners include academic, community, private, and government organizations such as the federal Office on Women's Health, the Baltimore City Health Department, Family League of Baltimore, Inc., Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, etc. The coalition has produced a strategic plan, which includes a tailored, evidence-based intervention featuring group weight counseling and exercise sessions for English and Spanish speaking postpartum women, logistical support, community engagement activities, and a trauma-informed care approach. The coalition can boast of these successes: over 90% attendance from Coalition partners since 2010; enrollment of over 510 women; receipt of approximately 1.7 million dollars in funding, and progress toward HP2020 goals. In this session, we will examine the coalition's evolution, formation of our public health alliance, programmatic and policy-level strategies, coalition evaluation efforts, and lessons learned about public/private partnerships. This presentation will highlight the complexity of working together to improve maternal health outcomes and find solutions to a major public health concern.

Biography

Stacey Tuck, the Director of the B'more Fit for Healthy Babies program, is humbled and excited to see the health improvements that program participants are making. Mrs. Tuck has close to 20 years of Maternal and Child Health experience in program development and monitoring, health education/promotion, and fiscal administration. She has raised or managed approximately 15 million dollars in program funds, assisted in the development of media campaigns, and presented program findings at national conferences. Mrs. Tuck earned her Master of Health Sciences from Towson University in 2002 and a Bachelor's degree in communication sciences from Northwestern University in 1994.

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