

RACIAL EQUITY IN BREASTFEEDING AND IMMUNIZATIONS GRANT

PROJECT REPORT



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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN IBCLCS OF COLOR

Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color (SEMI) is a Black-led, community-based organization, working to create an evidence-based, equity-focused comprehensive model of care in order to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding. SEMI centers equity and justice in a truly sustainable way, supporting the families of Southeast Michigan from the inside out. Current systems do not support birth and breastfeeding equity and significant harm has been done to communities of color, resulting in lower breastfeeding rates and health disparities. SEMI reflects and represents the families they serve, reaching families that otherwise would not have access to skilled birth and breastfeeding support. Keeping resources within Southeast Michigan ensures that time, money, and relationships stay local, meeting the needs of the community and establishing an equitable framework that positively impacts birth and breastfeeding outcomes.

SEMI's mission is to meet the unique needs for mentorship, fellowship and profession growth of IBCLCs of Color in the Southeast Michigan region in order to supply our community with equitable access to culturally appropriate lactation support and advocacy.

ABOUT THE AWARD

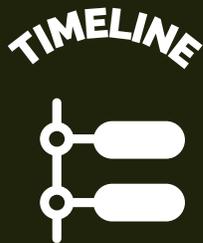
Human milk serves as the baby's first immunization. UNICEF states, "breastfeeding acts as a baby's first vaccine, providing critical protection from diseases and death." Human milk contains antibodies that fight infection. The link between the COVID-19 vaccine and similar immune protection from mother to baby can be made for families considering the vaccine, especially for breastfeeding families. Human milk also enhances vaccine efficacy and in that way can serve as double protection for infants and young children.

With the generous support of United Way for Southeastern Michigan, SEMI's work for this project focused on breastfeeding and immunizations, including creating educational materials, launching a social marketing campaign, facilitating a panel discussion, and conducting home visits with families. Thank you UWSEM for your investment in this work.

FAST FACTS



\$20,000



April 15, 2022 to
August 31, 2022



“I WAS HAVING A LOT OF BREASTFEEDING ISSUES. MY FRIEND TOLD ME ABOUT SEMI AND THAT THEY WERE THE BEST AND BLACK. WHEN THE LACTATION CONSULTANT GOT TO MY HOUSE, NOT ONLY DID SHE HELP ME WITH GETTING MY BABY TO LATCH WITH NO ISSUES, SHE ALSO LISTENED TO THE BUILT UP FEAR I HAD ABOUT GETTING VACCINATED. SHE LISTENED TO ME, LIKE REALLY LISTENED AND RIGHT THEN AND THERE TALKED TO ME ABOUT INFORMATION AND BACKED IT UP WITH TEXTS TO WHERE I COULD READ MORE ABOUT IT. I FELT SO AT PEACE AFTER SHE LEFT.”

-SEMI CLIENT

SUCCESSSES



DIRECT SERVICE TO FAMILIES

SEMI provided breastfeeding education and skilled birth and lactation support for families in the Metro-Detroit region. Their work in COVID-19 vaccine outreach, education and mobilization efforts included culturally congruent information on how breastfeeding contributes to vaccine efficacy and protects infants and young children from illness should be a part of vaccine education from care providers. As an integral component of their service model, SEMI members discussed breastfeeding as the first step toward protecting a child and building their immune system. They also encouraged vaccination and provided direct referrals and warm hand offs to public health and health care professionals who administered the COVID-19 vaccine. SEMI leveraged supplies donated to the 2020 Invest in Detroit Breastfeeding Fundraiser by Michigan WIC to the 2020 Invest in Detroit Breastfeeding Fundraiser to provide to families served by this project.

25
consults
provided



8

virtual consults
provided



17

home visits
provided across
metro-Detroit



LACTATION ISSUES ADDRESSED INCLUDED:

- Milk production
- Latch issues
- Infant intake concerns
- Nipple pain
- Breast pain
- Late preterm infant
- Vasospasms
- Supply
- Preterm twins
- Positions
- Infant weight loss
- Management of hyperlactation
- Ankyloglossia
- Nursing strike
- Nipple assessment
- Clogged milk duct
- Immunizations and breastfeeding
- Suspected TOTs
- Medication and breastfeeding
- Inability to sustain latch
- Frenotomy & post-care
- NICU infant and latching

DROP OF KNOWLEDGE

Visits were at no-cost to families while SEMI members were equitably compensated to do the necessary work in the community.

COMMUNITY OVER COMPETITION

SEMI members firmly believe in community over competition and lean into collaborating with community to better serve families. Referrals for breastfeeding support consultations came in from: Birth Detroit; doulas; pediatricians; home birth midwives (CPMs); hospital midwives (CNMs); local hospitals; Wayne, Macomb and Oakland County WIC agencies; past SEMI clients; mental health counselors; community members; and self-referral.



"WHEN MY HUSBAND AND I LEARNED WE WERE PREGNANT, I FELT TERRIFIED WITH ALL OF THE DECISIONS I HAD TO MAKE ABOUT IMMUNIZATIONS AND DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO OR WHAT TO THINK. HONESTLY, I FELT LIKE MY OB JUST WANTED ME TO DO WHATEVER SHE SAID BUT I WAS UNCOMFORTABLE. DURING A PRENATAL LACTATION VISIT WITH MY LACTATION CONSULTANT, SHE REALLY HELPED TO POINT ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. I DECIDED TO VACCINATE BECAUSE IT WAS MY CHOICE AND DECISION FOR MY BODY."

-SEMI CLIENT

PANEL DISCUSSION ON BREASTFEEDING AND IMMUNIZATIONS

SEMI is committed to ensuring that they support and educate families of color with the latest evidence on immunizations and breastfeeding. While part of these efforts focused on increasing vaccine utilization among birthing families of color, SEMI also continued addressing fears from within the community, mobilizing evidence-based information and education. They also provided critical access to resources and referrals to culturally representative providers and held a panel discussion, "Trap Chat: Breastfeeding and Immunizations" on Facebook Live to hold honest conversations without the filter and without the fluff in collaboration with YOLO Lactation and Doula Services.

154

video views

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDED:

- How human milk serves as protection against COVID-19 and other illnesses
- Working with trusted providers who center your goals to help you in making informed decisions about immunizations and breastfeeding
- Risks and benefits of breastfeeding and immunizations
- Keeping self and baby safe if families choose not to vaccinate
- Concerns and vaccine hesitancy due to systemic racism



DROP OF KNOWLEDGE

TrapChat provides trusted birth, breastfeeding, and parenting information from sources that their community relates to as they showcase each panelist's expertise from a lens of authenticity, showing up as our knowledgeable, trusted selves.



EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SEMI pivoted quickly to ensure that Black parents were safe to birth and human milk feed within systems where they are not listened to and at high risk of obstetric violence. Part of this included leaning into creating educational materials and utilizing social marketing to share evidence-based information on breastfeeding and vaccine safety. SEMI co-created and distributed infographics specifically designed to educate families about the safety and efficacy of immunizations during lactation and how human milk enhances vaccine efficacy. In addition, they co-created and implemented a social media campaign to address the safety and efficacy of immunizations during pregnancy and lactation.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND BREASTFEEDING

MATERNAL HEALTH

Vaccinations are an important preventive measure for mothers and their infants.

IS IT SAFE TO VACCINATE WHILE BREASTFEEDING

Yes it is! There are 2 vaccines that the CDC states should not be given while breastfeeding. Those vaccines are smallpox and yellow fever.

WHAT ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

The World Health Organization states that receiving the COVID-19 vaccine while breastfeeding may protect your baby through antibodies in your milk.

WILL VACCINATIONS HURT MY MILK SUPPLY

There is no evidence-based information that has found vaccines to decrease milk supply.

KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

Prevention is key! Keep your family and yourself up to date on your vaccines to help keep your baby healthy.

SEMIIBCLCOFCOLOR.ORG

WHERE CAN I GO TO GET VACCINATED

Local Health Department
Churches
Pharmacies
Primary care provider/ OB
Community Events
School fairs

IBCLCs of Color

BREASTFEEDING FACTS ABOUT VACCINATIONS

- There is no evidence that vaccines will reduce your milk supply.
- Most vaccines are safe while breastfeeding.
- Vaccination while breastfeeding may provide temporary protection to your baby.
- You have the right to make an informed decision, ask your provider for evidence-based information.

IBCLCs of Color

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO VACCINATE WHILE BREASTFEEDING

- ✓ Good hand hygiene
- ✓ Know your risk of exposure
- ✓ Limit visitors
- ✓ Protect yourself when in crowded areas (mask)

Stay up-to-date on your vaccines before pregnancy to ease your concerns

IBCLCs of Color

NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS



Increasing Capacity To Serve

SEMI has increased its capacity with four new active members and is onboarding to grow SEMI infrastructure, sustainability and capacity to serve



Growing Partnerships

SEMI has new contractual partnerships with Birth Detroit, MSU, and starting paperwork with U of M to layer nursing students into community-based learning while engaging them into each of SEMI's service models



Adding Mental Health Support

In addition to the mental health support SEMI already provides, SEMI will be adding new mental health therapists to their team to meet community need



Formalizing As An Organization

SEMI is beginning paperwork to become a Recognized Support Counsellor Organization with IBLCE and has started the 501c3 process to become a non-profit organization