



# Social Determinants of Health:

Why They Matter & What We Can Do About Them

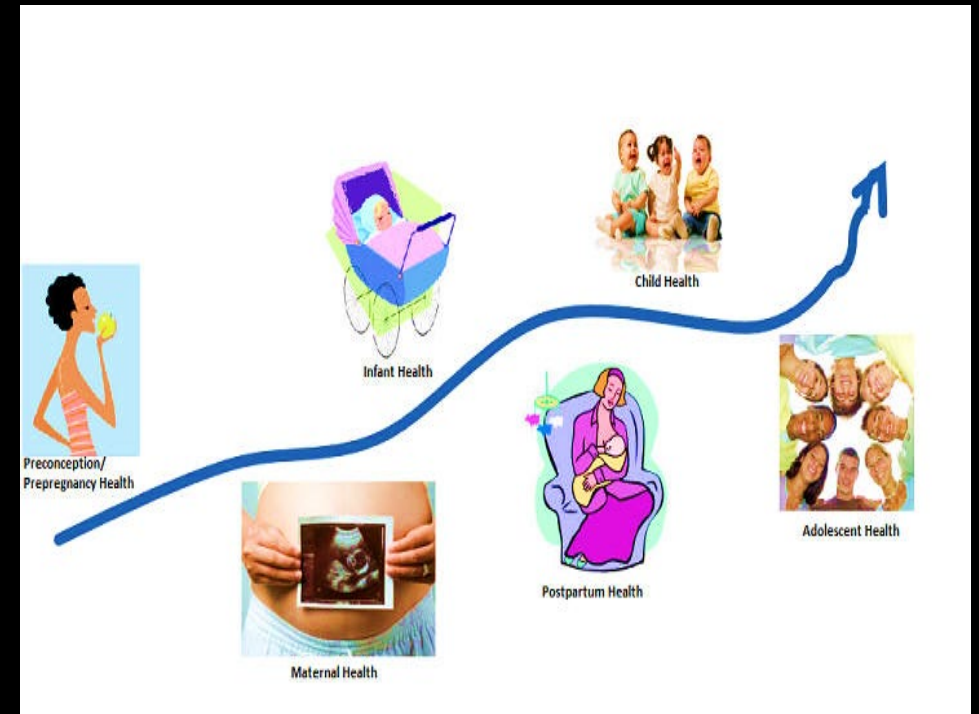
Carol Brady, MA  
2019 Miami-Dade Prematurity Symposium  
Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade

November 15, 2019

# Overview

## Objectives:

1. To identify **social and environmental factors** that impact **disparities** in birth outcomes.
2. To understand how **life course** influences health and well-being.
3. To identify **actionable strategies** that can be implemented by Healthy Start and other community programs to address disparities and the social determinants of health.

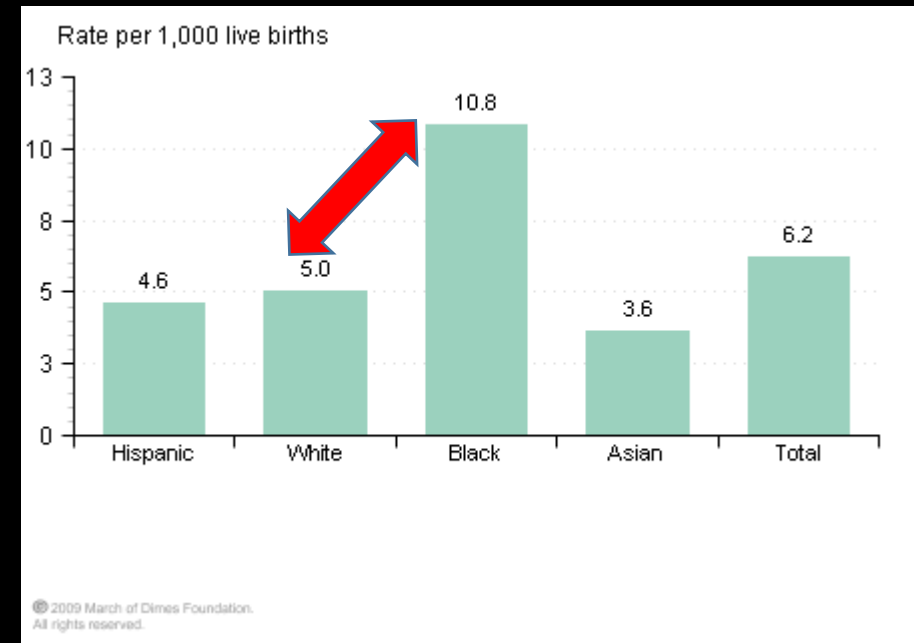


# Disparities in Birth Outcomes

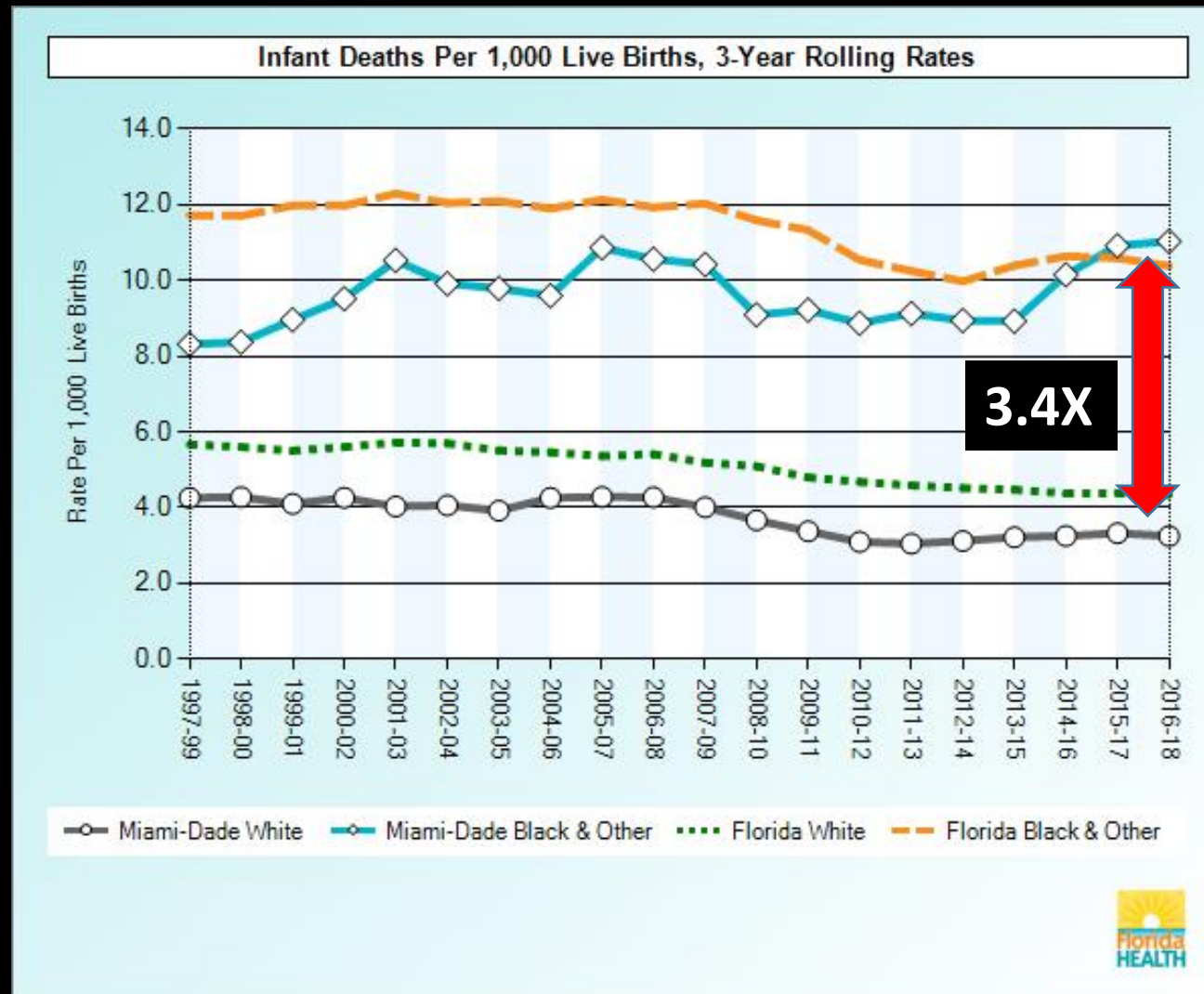
## United States, 2011-13 Average



## Florida, 2011-13 Average



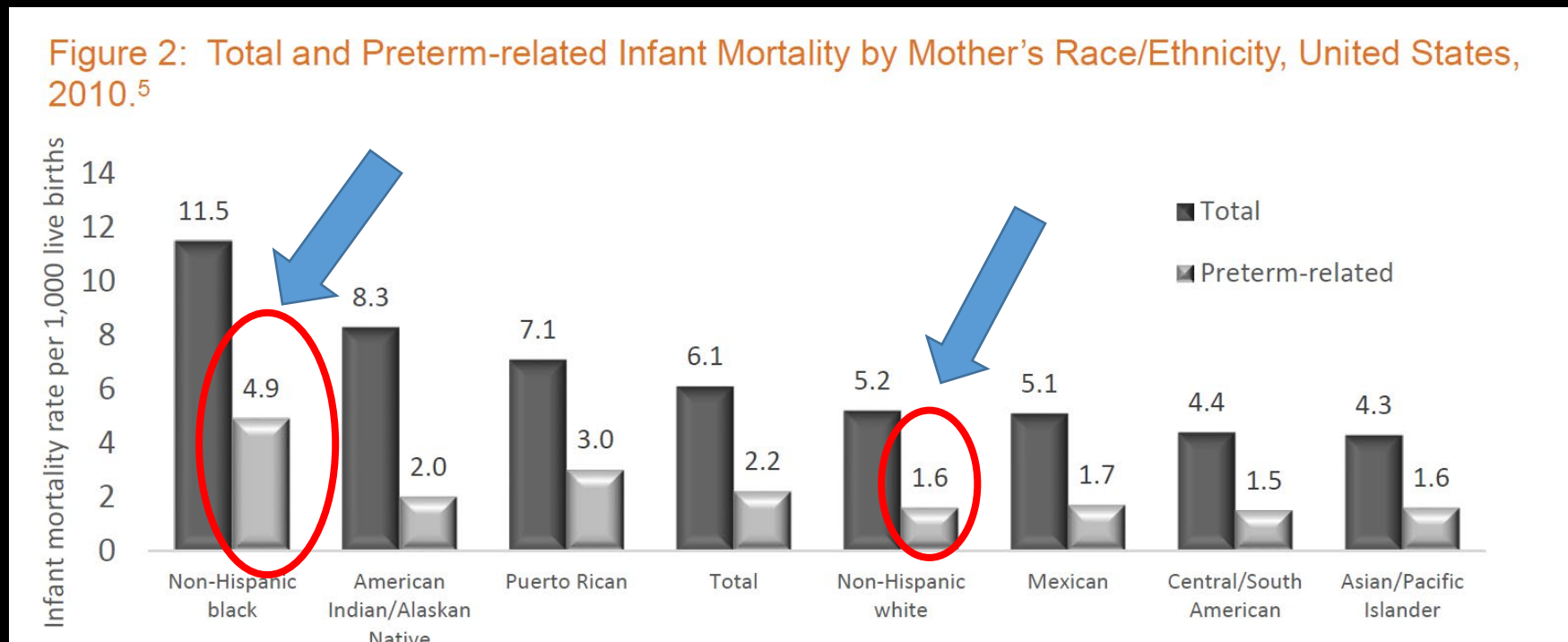
# Disparities in Birth Outcomes: Miami-Dade



2016-2018  
White 3.2  
Black & Other 11.0  
  
Hispanic 3.9  
Non-Hispanic 7.1

# Causes

- Prematurity is primary driver of disparities (black/ white)



# Determinants of Black-White Disparities

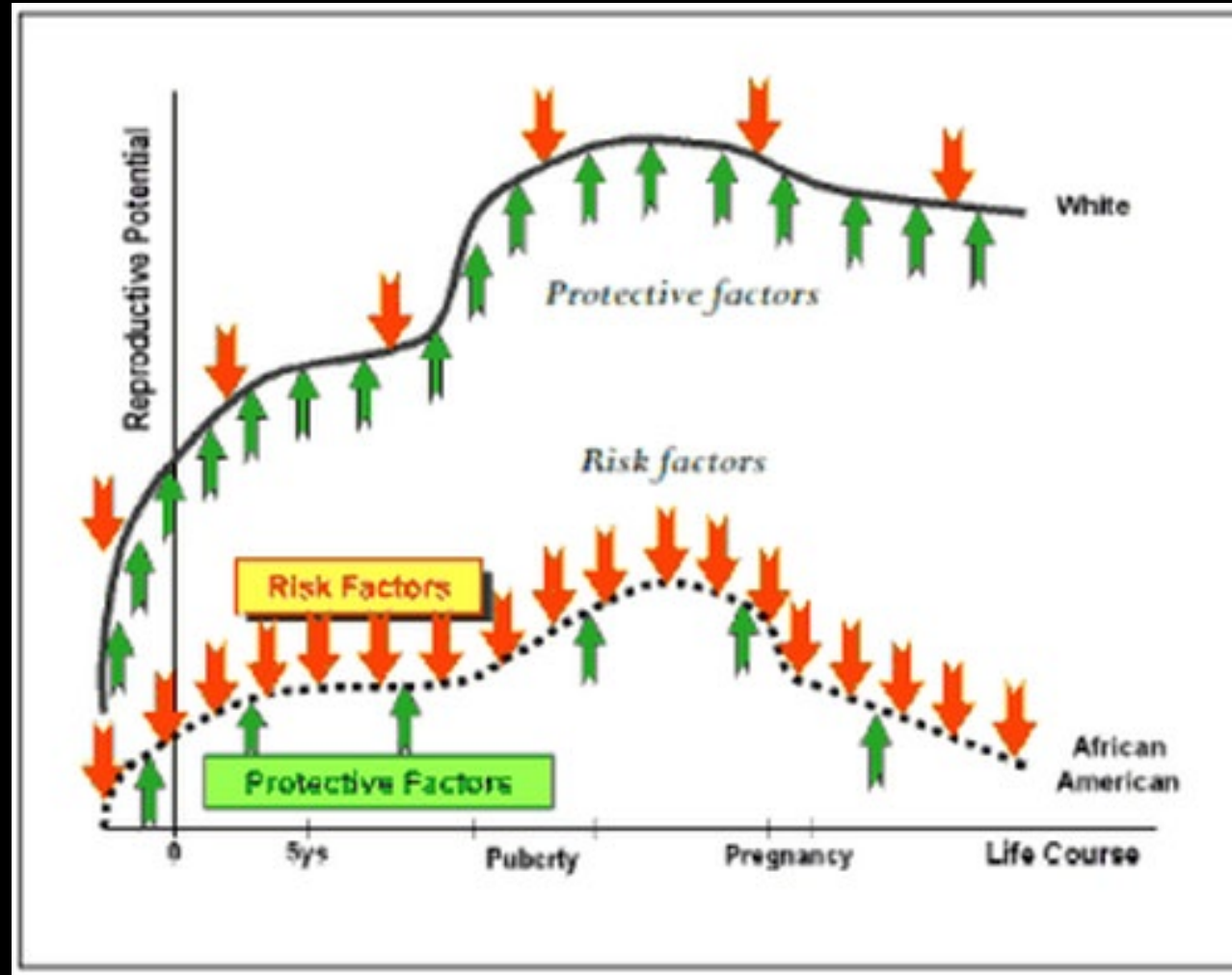
- 2/3 neonatal, 1/3 postneonatal
  - Neonatal contribution is driven by excess PTB, particularly <28 weeks
  - Postneonatal contribution driven by SIDS, injury, and infection; prematurity also increases vulnerability
- Excess PTB accounts for 80% of disparity, ~60% from 3 fold disparity at <28 weeks\*
  - Proximate causes: infection, vascular disorders
  - Distal determinants include lifecourse SES, environment, stress/discrimination, intergenerational factors



\* Schempf A, Branum A, Lukacs S, Schoendorf K. The Contribution of Preterm Birth to the Black-White Infant Mortality Gap: US, 1990 and 2000. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2007;97(7):1255-1260.



# Life Course Perspective



Lu MC, Halfon N. Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: a life-course perspective. *Matern Child Health J.* 2003;7:13-30

# Contributing Factors



## • Medical

- Access to care **before, during & between pregnancy**
- Identifying **women at risk** for giving birth too early and offering effective treatments to prevent preterm birth;
- Discouraging deliveries before **39 weeks** without a medical need;
- **Preventing unintended pregnancies** and achieving ideal birth spacing (length of time between pregnancies);

# Life Course Perspective

- Approach suggests a **complex interplay** of biological, behavioral, psychological and social protective factors **contributes to health outcomes** across the span of a person's life.
- Factors **impact racial, ethnic groups differently** and may explain disparities despite equal access to care during pregnancy.
- Life course models **BROADENS** the focus of MCH to include both **health & social equity**.



# It is more than medical care



- **Social**

- Community-level: poverty, housing, education, health insurance coverage, community engagement
- Individual-level: trauma-informed care, mental health services, home visiting enhancements (screening & referrals for perinatal depression, IPV), group care

# It will take more than medical care to eliminate disparities, reduce prematurity

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# Getting to the Root of This Disparity

## ❑ **Systemic factors driving health inequities include:**

- Education
- Labor and housing markets
- Government regulation
- Health care systems

## ❑ **Each are powerful social determinants of health**

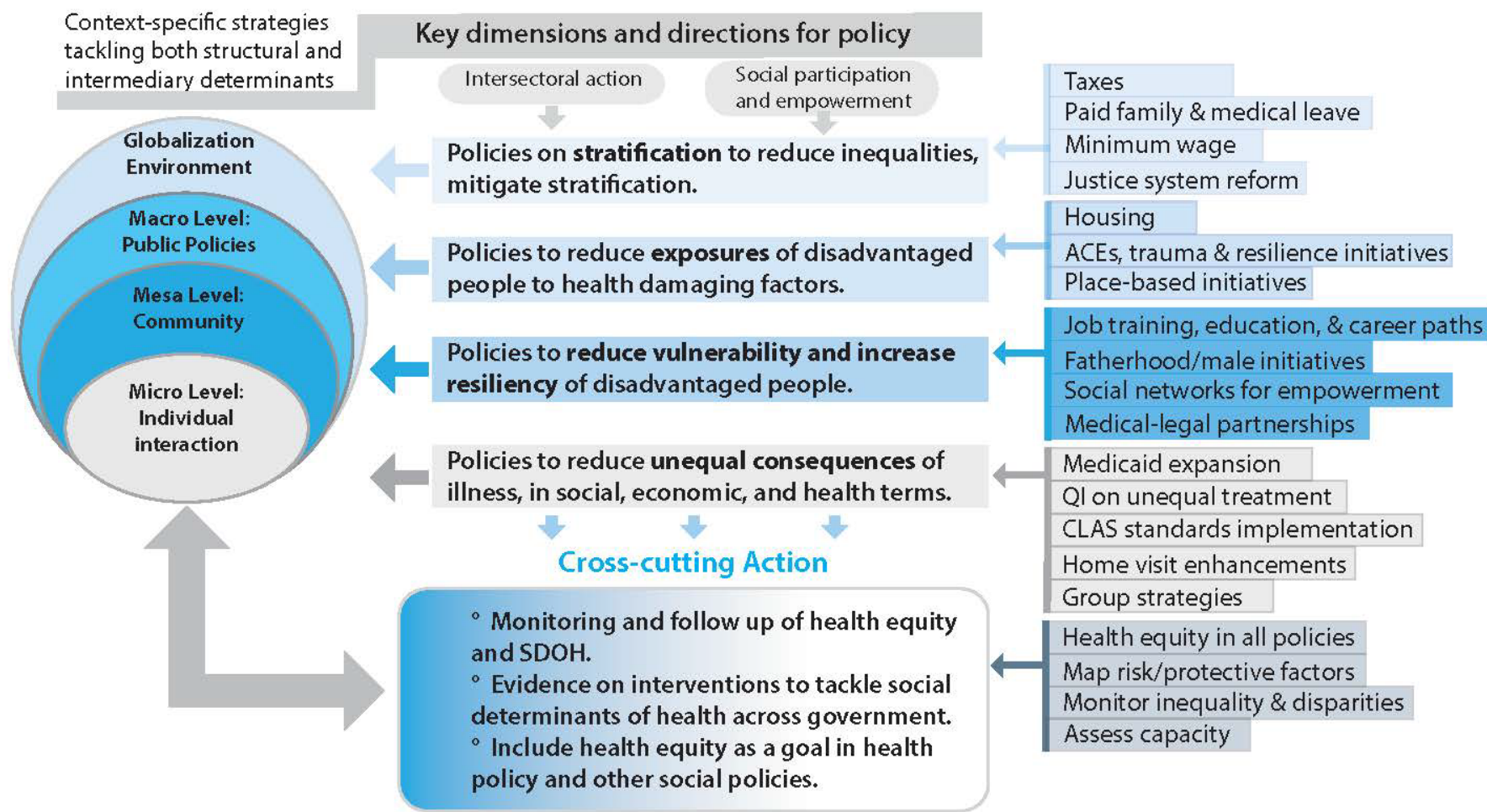
- Ones over which individuals have little or no direct control

## ❑ **They can only be changed through**

- Social and economic policies
- Political processes



# WHO Framework for Tackling Social Determinants of Health and Infant Mortality ColIN SDOH Recommended Strategies



# Impacting the SDOH Through Healthy Start



- Community level

- Partnering with Public Housing in Boston
- Using Transit to Reduce Infant Mortality in Columbus

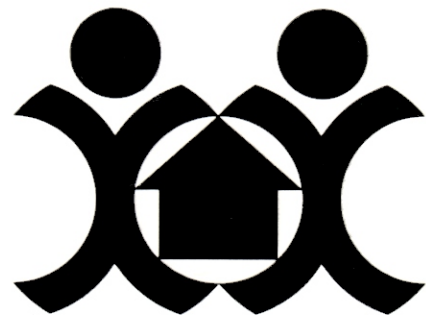


- Individual level

- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Educational Attainment
- Unintended Pregnancy
- Addressing Perinatal Depression

# Impacting the SDOH Through Healthy Start: Community

## Boston Healthy Start



Boston Housing Authority

## Columbus Celebrate One



# Impacting the SDOH Through Healthy Start: Individual

- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Educational Attainment
- Unintended Pregnancy
- Identifying & Addressing Perinatal Depression



# Reducing poverty: EITC & CTC

- Support for low-income WORKING families
- United Way's ALICE Project

<http://www.uwof.org/alice>



# Miami-Dade Data

## ALICE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

### 2016 Point-in-Time Data

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Population: 2,712,945 • Number of Households: 880,766

Median Household Income: \$45,935 (state average: \$50,860)

Unemployment Rate: 5.9% (state average: 6.0%)

ALICE Households: 40% (state average: 32%) • Households in Poverty: 19% (state average: 14%)

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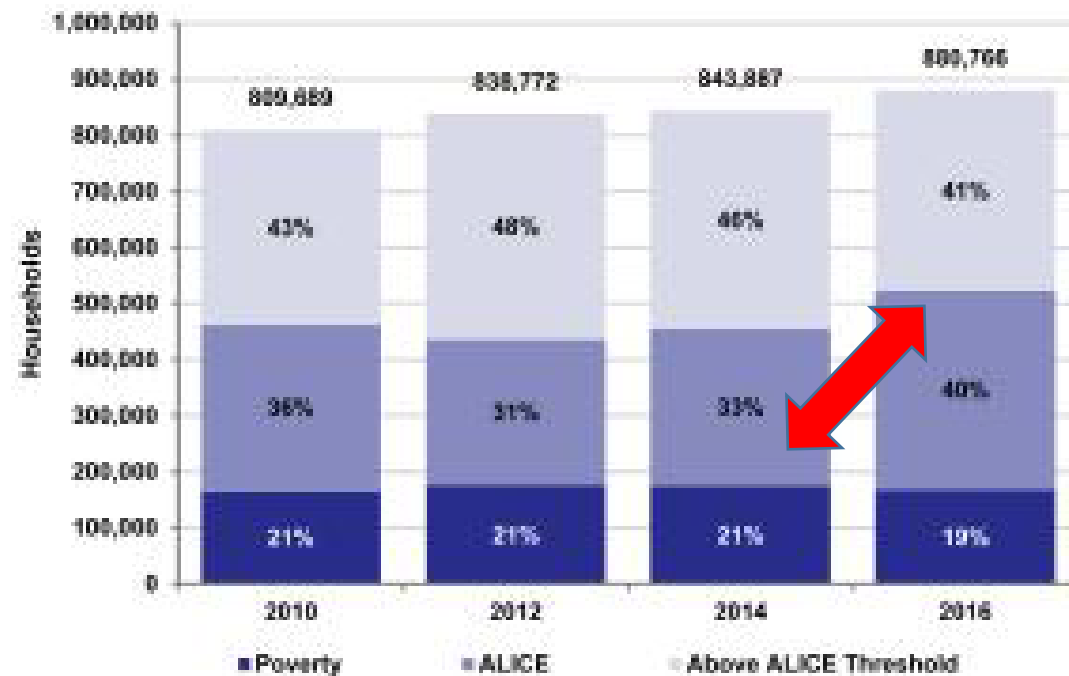
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# Miami-Dade Data

Poor, working poor  
make up 59% of  
households in  
Miami-Dade

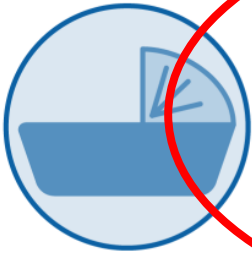
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Households by Income, 2010 to 2016



## Working-Family Tax Credits Help at Every Stage of Life

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) not only reward work and reduce poverty for low- and moderate-income working families with children, but a growing body of research shows that they help families at virtually every stage of life:



**Improved infant and maternal health:** Researchers have found links between increased EITCs and improvements in infant health indicators such as birth weight and premature birth. Research also suggests receiving an expanded EITC may improve maternal health.



**Better school performance:** Elementary and middle-school students whose families receive larger refundable credits (such as the EITC and CTC) tend to have higher test scores in the year of receipt.



**Greater college enrollment:** Young children in low-income families that benefit from expanded state or federal EITCs are more likely to go to college, research finds. Researchers attribute this to lasting academic gains from higher EITCs in middle school and earlier. Increased tax refunds also boost college attendance by

Source: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities.

# Earned Income Tax Credit

...EITC is associated with **better birth outcomes** with the largest effects seen among states with more generous EITCs.

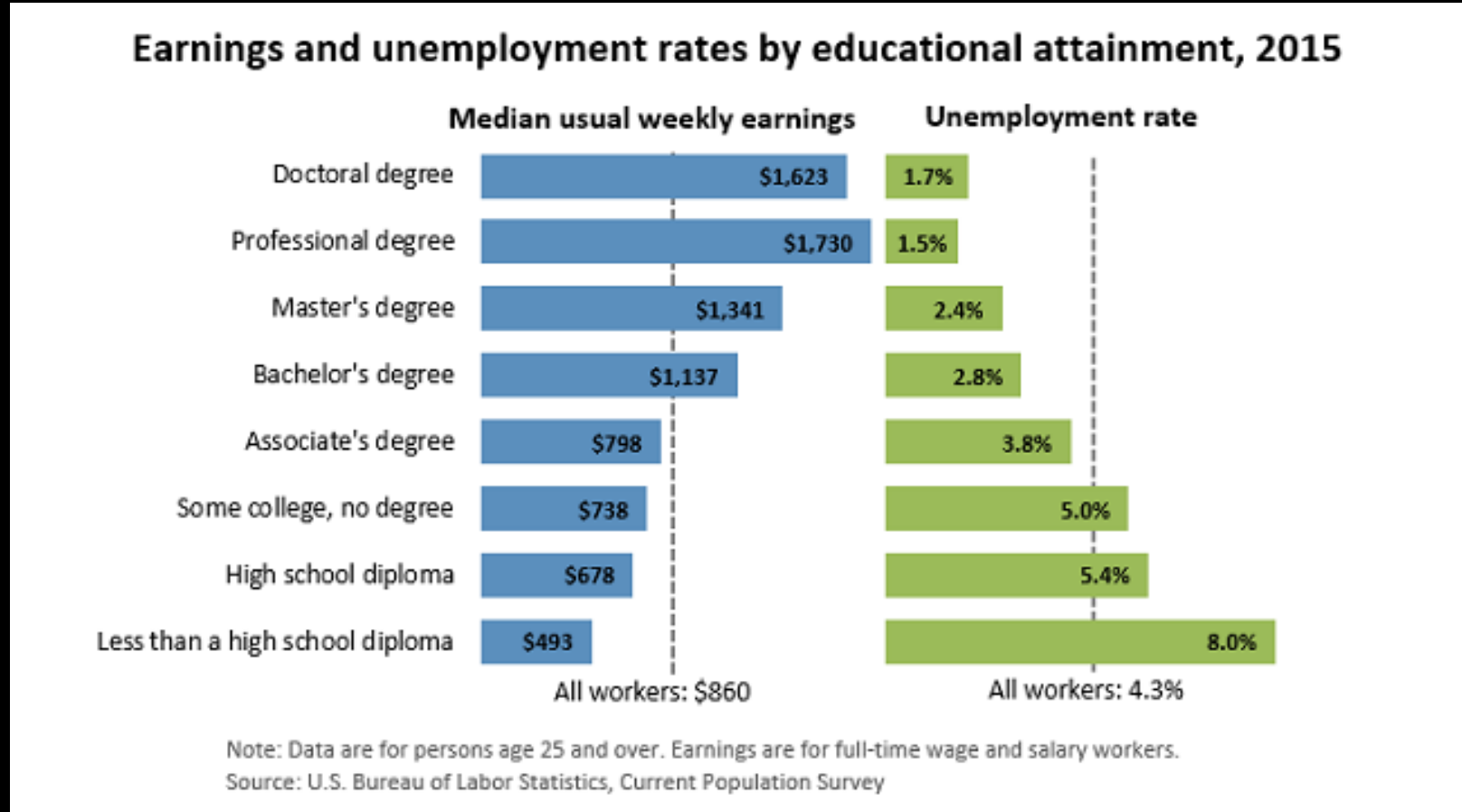
**Black mothers experience larger percentage point reductions in the probability of LBW and increases in gestation duration.**

Among mothers with a high school education or less, results translate into 3760 fewer LBW babies with black mothers and 8364 fewer LBW babies with white mothers per year at the most generous state EITC level (i.e., 10% or more of federal and refundable). Hispanic and non-Hispanic mothers display relatively similar effects.

Source: Komro KA, Markowitz S, Livingston MD, Wagenaar AC (2018) Effects of state-level earned income tax credit laws on birth outcomes by race and ethnicity, *Health Equity* 3:1, 61-67, DOI: 10.1089/heq.2018.0061.

# Other Strategies

- Promoting educational attainment
  - Impact of low educational attainment on lifelong earnings
  - Impact of maternal education on child development & educational success

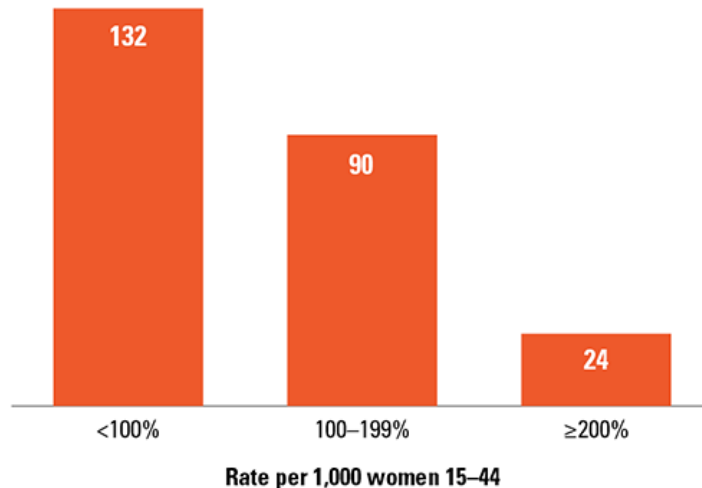


# Other Strategies

- Birth spacing
  - Impact on economic security
  - Impact on child development & educational attainment

## GIGANTIC GAP

Women with incomes below the federal poverty level have more than five times the unintended pregnancy rate of women at 200% of poverty and greater.



## WOMEN'S REASONS

A majority of clinic clients say that the use of birth control to prevent pregnancy has helped them meet educational, career, financial and family goals.

Allowed me to take better care of myself or my family

63%

14%

23%

Allowed me to support myself financially

56%

15%

28%

Helped me to stay in school or finish my education

51%

13%

36%

Helped me to get or keep my job or have a career

50%

14%

36%



Definitely true



Somewhat true



Not really true

# Other Strategies



- Identifying & addressing perinatal depression
  - Associated with higher risk of pre-term birth and LBW
  - Both moms & dads
  - Impact on child development & educational attainment



# P.S. SDOH Impact Staff Too



- Financial, environmental stressors
- Compassion fatigue
- Strategies
  - Self-care, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
  - Living wage
  - Non-monetary supports
  - Family friendly policies

# Take Home Messages

- Racial disparities persist, despite improvements in birth outcomes
- Prematurity drives disparities
- Addressing prematurity requires more than medical interventions
- Life course: disparities begin at birth
- Poverty and economic insecurity is foundational
- Healthy Start can impact poverty, social determinants through community- and individual- interventions
- Don't forget staff
- Everyone can play a role and have an impact!

Thank you!



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